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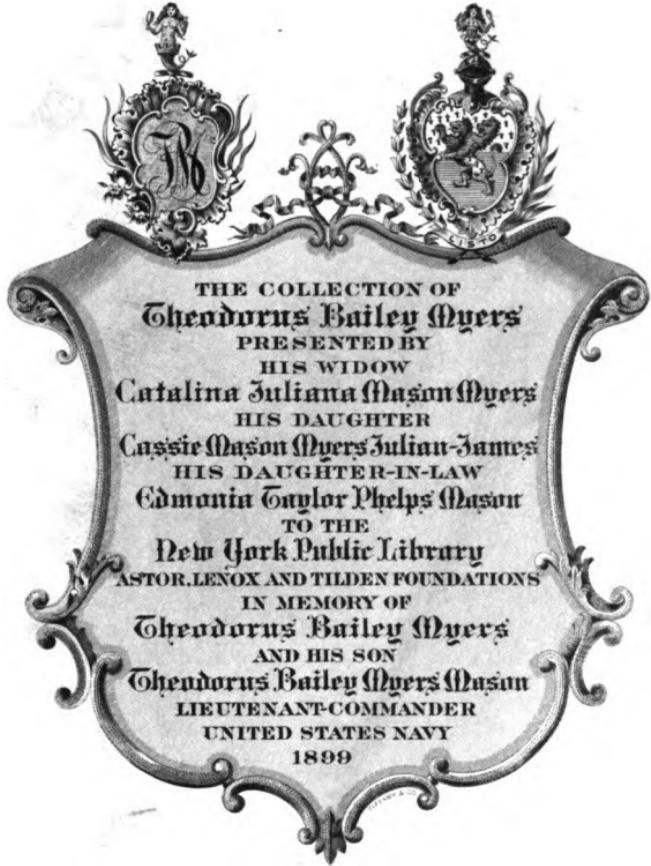
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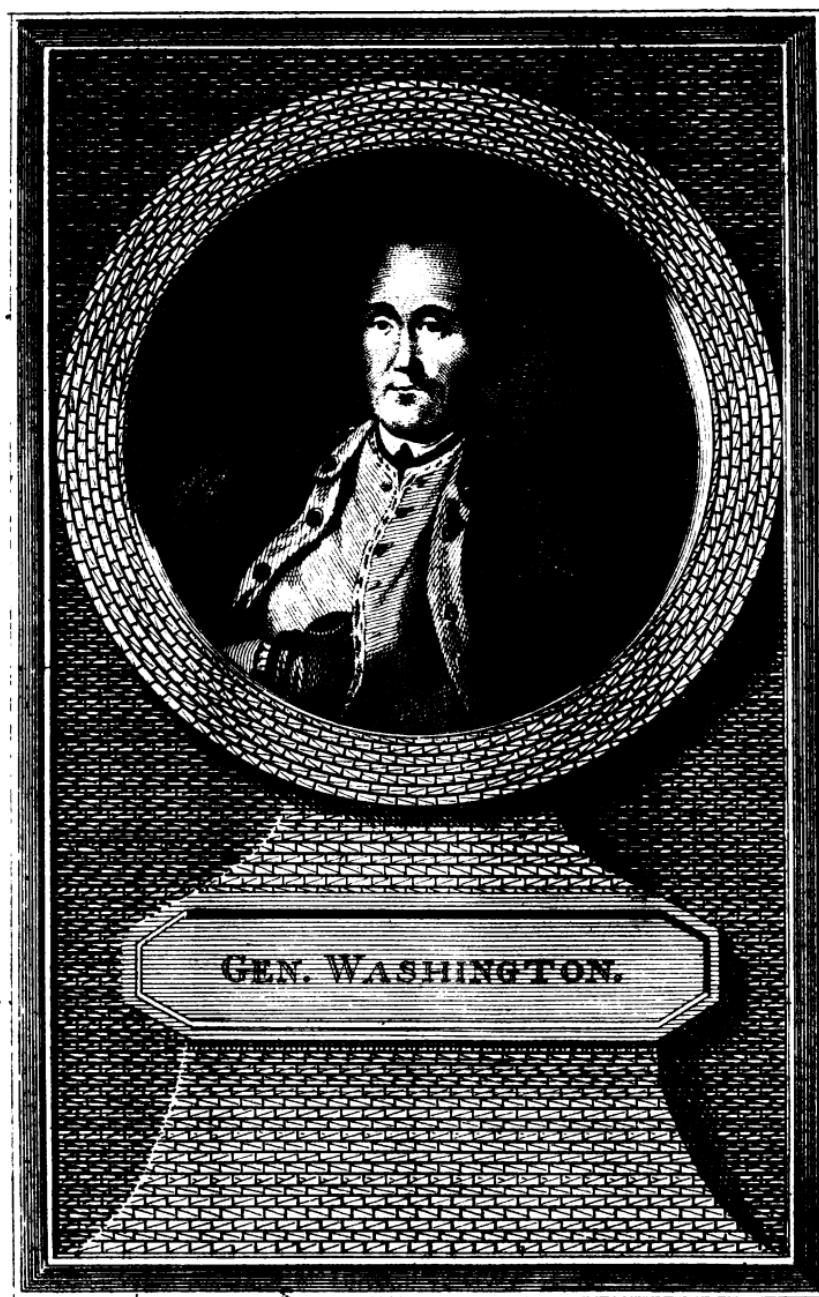
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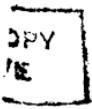
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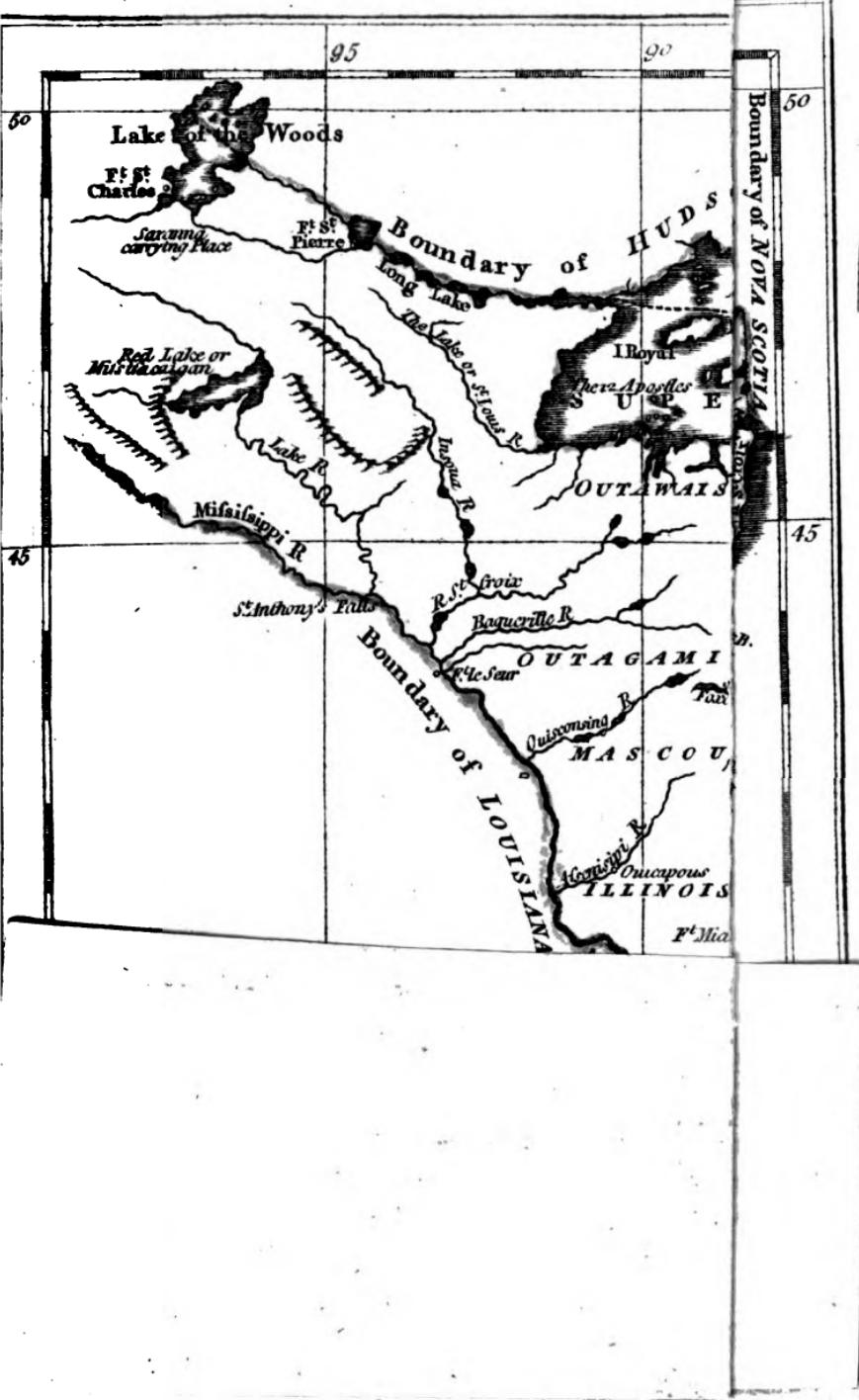
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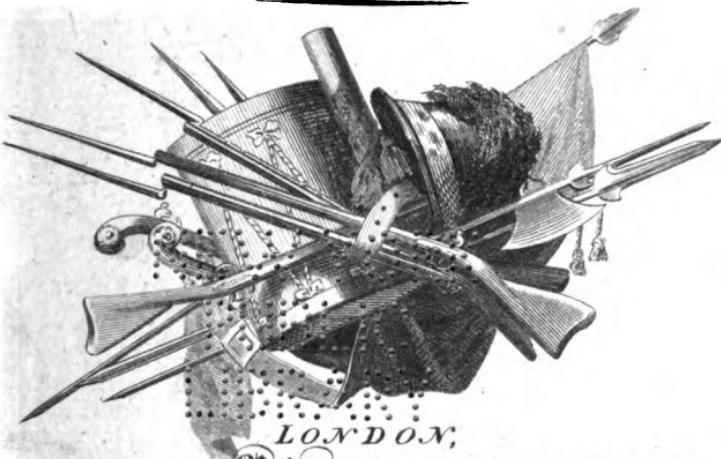




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By JOHN ANDREWS LL.D.
In Four Volumes with Portraits, Maps and Charts

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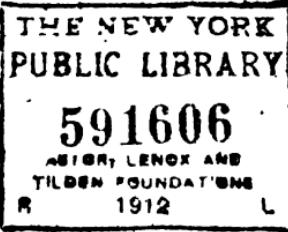


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H I S T O R Y

OF THE

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C H A P. XVII.

Transactions in Great Britain relating to America.

THE British ministry had now engaged the nation in a contest, from which it was equally incumbent on them to extricate it with honour, and difficult at the same time to recede. The expectations of the public had been highly raised by the spirit of firmness that had been displayed in asserting the supreme authority of the state over all its dominions; and it was not doubted but the most efficient plans would be formed and executed, in order to suppress and overthrown every scheme and attempt to oppose it.

It was therefore with infinite astonishment and dissatisfaction, the nation received such repeated intelligence of the successful stand the Colonies were making every where against the forces that had been sent to compel them to obedience; and that instead of having made any progress in re-establishing the power of Britain, they were unable to keep

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the field, and closely besieged themselves in the only town remaining to Britain throughout all her disaffected Colonies.

These were heavy tidings to those who had with such a sanguine assurance predicted an instant submission, on the very first appearance of the British fleets and armies. They were particularly alarming to ministry; who, though they might not expect a ready compliance, never imagined they would have been resisted with so much firmness, and have met with so little success.

The prospect of the reproaches they would infallibly meet with from their Parliamentary opponents, filled them with the greater anxiety, as they were sensible that these had too truly prognosticated what had happened.

And yet their spirit was too great to yield to the first impression of disappointment. They felt too deeply for the honour of the nation, as well as for their own, to give up a contest in which so much was at stake, on so slender a trial. They knew the resources of the country they governed, as well as the disposition of the people, were not to be easily broken. To make concessions therefore to those from whom they had so long required submission, would expose them to the slight of the public, and entirely ruin their reputation.

What bore heaviest upon those who had managed the affairs of the nation since the first commencement of this dispute, was the uncertainty of their determination what measures to take. They had so long hesitated about coercion, and yet had thrown out so many threats, that the Americans foreseeing, from their own resolution never to accede to the system of Great Britain respecting them, that matters would undoubtedly come to extremities at last, had in the long interval given them to reflect upon

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this subject, taken effectual measures to prepare for them.

It was chiefly this delay and hesitation that the majority of the enemies to the claims of the Colonies reprobated with great asperity. It was now additionally complained of, as an oversight arising from improper confidence; that after vigorous measures had been adopted, they had not been duly prosecuted; and that a strength had not been provided sufficient to put an end to the dispute at once. It ought to have been so powerful, as to have overwhelmed any force that could have been brought to oppose it.—By crushing the first insurrection, all others would have been prevented, and the very idea of resistance would have subsided.

These indeed were complaints of old standing. They had begun with the very altercation itself. It had at that time been vehemently asserted, that no policy could be worse than to temporise in a business of this kind: an absolute decision should have been made, either to relinquish the claims upon America, or enforce them with the whole might of the empire: this not having been done in proper time, it was now too late to attempt it. Warning had been given to the Colonies, and they had taken it. The blow should have fallen upon them unexpectedly: this might have proved the case at first, but could not at present.

It was argued on the other side, that to take such violent and sudden measures, was utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the English constitution. They who recommended them, forgot that in Great Britain lenity to the subject was the first maxim of government. To have therefore deviated from it in so striking a manner, would have subjected the ministry to universal odium: They would have been represented as arbitrary in the extreme, and as aiming to establish despotism over so considera-

part of the British dominions, in order to pave the way to the establishment of it at home. Imputations of this kind were often objected to ministers on slighter foundations; it was their duty to keep their character clear of them, and to stand in as fair a light as possible with a people so suspicious, and so easy to provoke as that of Great Britain.

They had, it was true, long born with the petulance and refractoriness of the Americans; but they were warranted in so doing by the hopes they had formed, that their forbearance would be attributed to the constitutional cause they had mentioned, by those towards whom it was exercised; and that these would be too prudent, to exasperate by their intemperate conduct, a nation of which they made a part, and of which they knew the spirit and power would not bear ill usage unrevenged.

But as the mildness with which they had acted, had been so ill requited, those who had complained of their tardiness, should now be witnesses that when roused, they could exert themselves with due vigour for the honour and interest of their country. These should be supported in such a manner, as should convince the world, that if Britain took a long time to consider, before she suffered resentment to prevail, yet when it was thoroughly kindled, she was able to make those repeat who had dared to provoke her.

The only reason why they had deferred putting forth the full strength of the nation, was that the Americans, by becoming convinced that it was in earnest, might yet have leisure to ponder on the dreadful dangers they would incur by venturing to encounter it: That were they to prove unequal to such a strife, as it probably would happen, they had no further favour to expect, and would no longer be treated as fellow subjects, but as a conquered

quered nation. This was a prospect which they could not fail to behold in their cooler moments; they ought to reflect, that the successes they had met with, were accidental, and owing to fortuitous causes, which would not long subsist. When they saw the force of Great Britain approaching in full array, they would then discover how arduous a task they had undertaken, and begin to think themselves mistaken, in rating their strength so high as they had been induced to do by some unexpected events, which, however favourably they might seem to omen to their wishes, might in the end prove much more delusive than serviceable.

Such were the representations of that party which adhered to the ministry. In order to make them good, and effectually to silence the animadversions of delay and want of vigour, to which they had hitherto been exposed, it was resolved to prosecute the war Britain was now engaged in, with all the strength and might of which the realm was capable. Such a force should be provided for that purpose, as should display to the European world the immensity of the British power, and what resources this kingdom possessed, when it became necessary to employ them. America should stand astonished at the greatness of these efforts; and unless misled by wilful infatuation, would clearly perceive the unavailingness of all endeavours to withstand them.

Thus they should compass the two points they had most at heart; they should reconcile firmness with lenity. It would then be acknowledged by all impartial people, that they had behaved with the constitutional moderation that became a British ministry; and on the failure of that, had exerted themselves, as it was their duty to do who directed the affairs of a brave and potent nation.

This manner of reasoning, and this plan of acting, were, altogether, not unacceptable to the tem-

per of many people at this time. It may be added, that in this country, vigour and resolution in its rulers are a covering for many deficiencies. No nation that enters into a war, is less apt to look back into the proceedings that brought them into it than the English. They go forward too earnestly for much retrospection, and are chiefly intent on prosecuting it with spirit. Such a disposition, inclines them to bear with alacrity the distresses that necessarily follow, and to think little of them, provided they are counterbalanced with events that tend to gratify their natural passion for glory.

Their pride and high-mindedness had been severely checked by the late transactions in America. They saw a people, who, though joined by the strictest bonds of fraternal union, were still considered by them in a secondary light, pretending to a right of equality in every thing they looked upon as most valuable and important. This pretension had been asserted with a vigour and success that surprised and offended them: they felt themselves, in consequence, much less disposed to examine the justice of their demands, than to make them sensible that Englishmen were still their superiors.

It had been apprehended, that a speedy diminution of the trade with America would have been the immediate consequence of hostilities; but it happened otherwise. The importations from that country, for the payment of their debts, were remarkably abundant this year, and furnished their well-wishers with well-grounded reasons to represent them as a people whose probity rendered them the more highly deserving of our respect; as notwithstanding they were at the eve of a war with the most dangerous enemy they could have to encounter, still they were too honest, and too generous, to avail themselves of such a pretence to defer the settlement of their accounts with that very enemy.

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The payment of this balance, together with the uncommon demands from Turkey, and Russia, about this time, brought immense sums of money into the nation, and occasioned a circulation of trade and business that kept up for a while the spirits of the mercantile classes, and prevented any complaints for want of the American commerce.

Add to this, the increasing necessity of large and expensive supplies to the fleets and armies that were waging war at such a distance, and in so many different parts. The complicated variety of public exigencies was now such, as to afford subsistence and profit to a multitude of branches. The numerous shipping employed for these purposes, the many contracts, and other beneficial methods of dealing, occasioned by the measures so extensively pursued, made them in some respects extremely popular. Present emoluments effectually hid the prospect of future detriment; and the crowds that participated in the gains arising from all these quarters, were not only animated themselves, but contributed to encourage others in the prosecution of a war that procured them so lucrative a maintenance.

But numbers of those commercial individuals, whose insight into the causes of the prodigious influx of money that had lately taken place, led them to fear that it would not continue, were as strenuous as ever in their disapprobation of hostilities with America. The majority in the trading towns were of this opinion. The great body of the people still continued divided; but the plurality were inclined to peace. They considered the Americans as brethren, and though they were not willing to yield to their threats, and would have gladly seen them humbled in the field of battle, yet this proceeded purely from the point of national honour. They would not, with the like satisfaction, have seen them

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despoiled of their liberties, and reduced to absolute and uncontrolled subjection.

Such was the disposition of the British nation in general. Many, indeed, among those that composed the middle classes, remained in a kind of indifference which way fortune might decide the contest. While they wished well to their country, they did not forget, that the welfare of the Colonies was closely connected with theirs; and the spirit of personal independence, so natural to Englishmen, rendered them indulgent to the claims of a people whose pretensions went no farther than their own.

It was chiefly among the lower denominations, the dislike of an American war was most visible: as no people in Europe entertain less dread and deference for their superiors, and are more ready to thwart and counteract them than the commonalty of England, they spoke their sentiments boldly and without restraint, and scrupled not to reprobate the conduct of their rulers in terms of the utmost acrimony,

The persuasion was strong and rooted among this part of the community, that the people of the Colonies were ill treated and oppressed, and that they were therefore justifiable in defending themselves. Though this opinion had no influence in the councils of those who governed the nation, yet it was highly prejudicial to the measures they were forming. It materially defeated some of the principal plans in agitation, by obstructing those levies of men without which they could not be prosecuted. Never did the recruiting service, in the memory of the oldest persons who had been employed in it, proceed so heavily: the reluctance of individuals was striking and peculiar; they not only refused the usual proffers of encouragement, but reprobated, with warmth and indignation, the cause in which they were solicited

to

to engage, and exerted themselves to prevent others from engaging.

Neither was this open reprobation of the American war confined to this class. The city of London, in its public capacity, testified an averseness to it equally acrimonious. When intelligence arrived of the affair at Lexington, the whole city was thrown into commotion. Those murmurs and complaints were renewed that had now distracted it for ten years. A remonstrance and petition were framed no ways inferior for pointedness and vehemence of expression, to any that had ever preceded. Animadversions of the severest nature were passed upon the ministry and Parliament, and no censures were spared upon those who had promoted or advised the present measures.

It was not without difficulty that the more moderate party procured a representation to the Throne, expressed in terms more cool and temperate than the former one. It was styled, "an humble petition and address." It lamented the disturbances in America, together with those measures which had occasioned them. It asserted the attachment of the Colonies to Great Britain, and justified their conduct upon those principles of freedom inseparable from its constitution. It referred to the various proofs they had given of their readiness and zeal to assist this country, and implored a suspension of hostilities, that such methods to compose the unhappy differences now distracting the British empire might be applied, as might terminate in a permanent pacification.

The answer to this address was, that while the constitutional authority of the kingdom was openly resisted by America, it was necessary to continue a spirited enforcement of those measures by which alone the rights and interests of the realm could be duly maintained.

In this season of dissention and discontent, nothing was more remarkable than the firmness with which sundry

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sundry individuals avowed their adherence to the cause of America, and maintained the propriety of their conduct.

Among these, no person signalized himself more conspicuously than the Earl of Effingham.—He had from his youth been fond of a military life. Actuated by a strong desire of improvement, he had served as volunteer in the Russian army in the late war against the Turks. Since his return to England, he had constantly opposed the ministerial designs against the Colonies. It happened that the regiment to which he belonged, was one of those which now was ordered out upon that service. His spirit was too great, and the sense of his dignity too powerful, to suffer him to become instrumental in the execution of measures which he had so explicitly disavowed and condemned. Impelled by these motives, he resigned his commission, declaring that his honour and his conscience would not permit him to shed the blood of his fellow subjects in America, who were contending for their liberties.

The example of a nobleman of such distinguished rank, was not without influence. Several officers who were of the same opinion, declined acting against America. Though their conduct did not pass uncensured by many, it met with no less a number of approvers. In so disputable a question it was generally allowed, that a man's conscience and principles were not bound to give way to the maxims of military obedience.

This resignation was highly applauded by all those who dissented from ministry. It conferred a high degree of popularity on that nobleman. He received the public thanks of the city of London for his behaviour; and was honoured with the same testimony of approbation and respect from the city of Dublin,

Both

Both the metropolis and kingdom of Ireland, were in general averse to the system pursued respecting America. That party held a numerous meeting about this time, wherein they declared their disapprobation of it in the most poignant and severe terms.

The suspension of the sale and purchase of negro slaves in the West Indies, and in North America, and the prohibition to export arms and powder, had thrown great impediments in the way of the vast trade that had been so long carried on to the Coast of Guinea from Bristol and Liverpool. The numerous shipping employed heretofore in that branch of business, were laid up. The sailors dismissed from the merchant service on this and some other accounts, amounted in this latter place to near three thousand. Their situation soon rendered them riotous; and the town's people were obliged to call in the aid of the military to quell them.

While the nation was in this state of perplexity, the petition which the Continental Congress had drawn up to be laid before the King, was brought over to England by Mr. Richard Penn, Governor of Pennsylvania, and one of the principal proprietors of that Province. He was commissioned by the Congress to present this petition to the King, after which he was directed to give it to the public.

The arrival of this address was a welcome news to those who wished to see an end of this unfortunate quarrel. Men in general began to congratulate themselves, that the application came first from America, and hoped that an overture of this kind would be favourably treated, especially as it was reported that the petition was worded in the most respectful manner, and contained some proposals that tended strongly to remove all obstacles to a pacification,

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But this expectation was soon disappointed. On the first of September, Mr. Penn and Mr. Lee delivered this petition into the hands of Lord Dartmouth; and on the fourth they were told that no answer would be given to it.

A declaration of so explicit and positive a nature, put a period at once to the hopes of all those who had flattered themselves that a road had been opened to reconciliation. The Americans in London expressed on this occasion more surprize than any other people. They had been informed by their correspondents in America, that an address to the Throne was on its way to England, the purport of which was of so conciliatory a nature, that it was not doubted in the Colonies, it would be productive of some good effect. This persuasion seemed so well founded there, that on the strength of it, the Americans, it has been said, began to slacken in their military preparations, imagining, that before long they might become needless.

It was universally agreed, that the language of this celebrated petition was respectful, and breathed peace and reconciliation in the highest degree. Those who were inclined to give satisfaction to the Colonies in the way which they had pointed out in this request, represented Lord Dartmouth's answer as a final renunciation of all friendly intercourse with America. This would drive them to those extremities, at which they had hinted in the declaration they had published to justify their taking up arms. They would now be compelled to connect themselves with those who were best able to protect them; and who could blame them for it? Britain drove them, as it were, from her presence, and even enjoined them total silence. What were they to do in so mournful an extremity, but depart as they were bidden, and seriously consult how to shelter themselves from the impending wrath of an irritated people,

people, who had plainly given them to understand, that they had nothing henceforth to expect but enmity and vengeance?

Was this, said they, a proper manner of receiving the decent and humble supplication of three millions of men, inhabiting a rich, fertile, and extensive country, whose wealth, populousness, and importance, were daily increasing, and were already become the wonder of the universe? Who ever could have suggested such an answer, was either a secret foe to the British nation, or was urged by some fatal and unaccountable infatuation, to view every circumstance relating to Great Britain and America, in a false and erroneous light.

This answer, said they, involved three things that America had long wished, and made her utmost efforts to keep at the remotest distance: these were the necessity now imposed upon them to renounce their allegiance, to declare themselves independent, and to seek a foreign connection. The first they were in a manner commanded to do, the second was a natural consequence of the first, and the third was the necessary result of both. It was not to be imagined that after so terrible an ultimatum as they had heard, they could, in prudence and justice to themselves, neglect any means to secure their country and its interests from the dangers with which they were evidently threatened.

Such were the representations made by the Americans and their adherents on this occasion. Nor were they wanting in further animadversions on the reply given to their petition. It was, in their opinion, not only injudicious, and tending to perpetuate an enmity, which it seriously behoved both sides to conclude, but it was in the highest degree ill-timed, and ill-agreeing with the present situation of the British affairs in America.

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Had that country been overrun and thoroughly subdued by the arms of Britain, such an conqueror even then, would not have become a humane conqueror; but it was neither conquered nor yet had suffered a single defeat. The troops sent to reduce them, were, on the contrary, cooped up in a narrow space, where they found it difficult to maintain their ground. They were at this hour enduring all the extremities of a close siege, a prey to sickness and famine, depressed with continual toils and fatigue, and every hour expecting to be assaulted by a justly irritated enemy, and in danger of being either put to the sword, or compelled to surrender, and lay down their arms for the preservation of their lives.

Was this a season to assume the stile of victory and conquest? What grounds had Britain to flatter herself that an alteration would not fail to take place? America had shown that even in the very outset of her military exertions, she was no despisable enemy: she had faced the bravest troops of Britain, on the very first day that blood was shed, with an intrepidity which was even acknowledged by those very troops. She had, on the next occasion that offered, repulsed them with such a slaughter, as, considering their number, no army had hardly ever experienced. They remembered and felt the consequences of it to the present moment.

The Americans had not lost sight of those two memorable days. If they had spirit sufficient then to meet in fight those enemies, whose valour was so universally acknowledged, and whose superiority in arms they had so much reason to dread; surely now that they had proved themselves not unworthy to combat with them, it could not be presumed in England that the terror of future conflicts and dangers was able to daunt them.

To insult the Americans was not the way to conciliate or to terrify them. They had strove, with

all their might, to bring about a return of friendship; and even while successful, had foregone all advantages, and humbled themselves before Great Britain, in hope of soothing her into gentleness and conciliation; but if she could spurn them from her feet, even in the hour of her own disappointment, and while the fate of war hung in suspense, what would her treatment of them have been, had fortune declared in her favour? Let the impartial world decide, whether Britain had henceforth any right to expect so submissive an application as the present, if indeed any application at all.

America had, however, by stooping so low, acquitted herself of a child's duty in the utmost acceptance of the meaning: she had, in a manner, kissed the rod that had struck her so severely. If, after this proof of dutifulness, the parent state retained her unfeelingness, and was resolved to repeat her blows, would any that were unprejudiced, assert that America, thus used, ought still to prostrate herself at the feet of Britain?

Such were the comments made upon the answer given to the petition. After representing the disposition of the generality of the European nations in favour of America, it is almost needless to mention that they blamed the rejection of this address, as much as the Americans themselves, and thought that the fairest and most auspicious opportunity was now lost of terminating this unfortunate contest to the satisfaction of both parties.

But the favourers of ministry warmly reprobated these allegations, as mere pretences and deceptions. True it was, they argued, the Colonies had approached the Throne with every appearance of respect; but what had they offered? Obedience to its injunctions? Repentance for their unruliness? Or assurances of future compliance or submission? These alone were the test of their sincerity: without these,

these, they still remained in a state of refractoriness, which the dignity of government could not countenance consistently with its own rights and claims. Were Britain to treat with them, while they had arms in their hands, it would produce two effects which would prove essentially derogatory to her supremacy; it would place them on a footing of equality, and would teach them to recur to violence whenever they had a point to carry.

When the petition was viewed coolly and impartially, it offered nothing that could be accepted with propriety. Instead of obedience, it proposed stipulations; where repentance was expected, their conduct was justified; and for assurances of good behaviour, they demanded concessions. Were these proofs of a desire to be reconciled upon any terms but their own; and were not these the very cause of the contest? Was it not in opposition to such terms that Britain had armed, and taken the necessary determination to do herself justice? Must she now submit to the mortification of laying her just anger aside, and receive with open arms her revolted subjects, while they still continued refractory, and threatened her with a continuance of their resistance, unless she tamely subscribed to their proposals?

It was easy for people, in the vehemence of their attachment to any cause, to varnish it over in such a manner, as to make the wrong appear the right side of the question: But nothing could be more simple and clear than the case between Great Britain and her Colonies. Was she not the sovereign state? Did they not profess hommage and loyalty to her? What could these words mean, but compliance with her injunctions, unless they were evidently unreasonable and oppressive? But the altercation was not about their rectitude or impropriety; it was merely whether they should be complied with at any rate;

fate; it was a refusal to obey any commands, however just and judicious, unless they thought proper to admit them.

In such a case no Prince or State in Europe would quietly put up with an indignity of so glaring a nature. Was the case their own, they would have acted with tenfold the diligence and vigour that Great Britain had displayed on the present occasion. They affected indeed to confiscate the treatment of the British Colonists; But who did not perceive their drift? Envy of the prosperity and grandeur of Britain, was at the bottom of all this pretended concern: Its aim was to excite the Colonists to come to an irreconcilable rupture with their parent state, and to dismember themselves from her dominion. This was the sole intent of that ostentatious zeal they had lately exhibited in their favour; As they had not succeeded in their various endeavours to overturn or weaken the power of Great Britain, they were now intent upon availing themselves of its intestine dissensions; and hoped to compass by means of them what they had not been able to effect of themselves.

Such were the warm friends to whom the Colonists looked with so much thankfulness for their partiality; their friendship confided in spiriting them up to proceed in a quarrel, which would involve them in blood and destruction; and of which the issue, whether prosperous or fatal to them, would still forward the ends of these zealous patrons; which was the diminution of the greatness of Britain, by whatever means it could be accomplished.

Was it to reward this patronage they were so ready to make a sacrifice of their real and substantial interests? Much it was to be feared, that America would become the victim of seduction. Led away by the subtlety of infidious and false-hearted abettors of their resistance to their old and truest

friends; and intoxicated by that incense of applause which was so fulsomely profused upon them from every part of the world that was inimical to Britain, it was, unhappily for the Colonists, to be apprehended that they would become the blind instruments of European craft and policy. Were they to succeed in those designs, which it was well known were prompted to them from more quarters than one, they would have done no more than avenged at their own cost, the cause of those nations that had suffered so many humiliations from Britain, without reaping any benefit to themselves.

Who could tell whether this petition, of which the merit was rated so high, was not the joint scheme of the Americans and their European abettors, in order to gain time by means of the deliberations that would follow, in case of its favourable acceptance? These, when once begun, might easily be extended to a convenient length, and afford ample leisure to perfect those preparations that would be requisite to face the efforts that were expected on the side of Britain.

The Americans began to be sensible, that although the first steps taken by the British ministry had not answered its expectation, yet it would follow up the determination taken to reduce them to reason, with unabated spirit. They knew, that with all their boastings, the plans they had commenced were not yet brought to any degree of consistency; and that without some further allowance of time and care, they should not place themselves on that footing which was requisite to maintain their ground, and keep possession of the advantages they had gained.

Whether therefore the petition was a measure suggested to them by others, or was their own spontaneous production, mattered little at the present. It could evidently answer no other purpose than that

of procrastination, which was now so opposite to the views and interest of Great Britain, that nothing tending to indecision or delay was any longer admissible. The Colonies were fully acquainted with the conditions upon which they would be restored to peace and favour. It was hourly in their power to arrest the operations of war, by signifying their acceptance of them. Until they consented to these conditions, the mischiefs occasioned by hostilities ought to be reputed their own seeking, and Britain was acting no other part than that of a lawful sovereign enforcing obedience from rebellious subjects.

Would it be prudent, after incurring such a prodigious expence in fitting out fleets and arraying armies, to suspend their operations upon a bare uncertainty? The petition was no more at best: it promised nothing, and it offered nothing. Specifications were studiously, though perceptibly avoided; all was left to the chance of negotiations: but these, it was well known, and taught in the school of politics, were best forwarded by arms. While they were carried on in the cabinet alone, length and tediousness attended them, and their final conclusion was always made in the field.

Let this therefore decide this troublesome and perplexing busines. Let the Americans be convinced at once of the ineffectualness of their endeavours to terrify Great Britain out of her just claims. Let them learn the difference between a state of obedience and tranquility, and a state of resistance and confusion. After experiencing the happiness of the one, and the miseries of the other, they would be better disposed to listen to terms of accommodation, than while they were flushed with apparent successes, and had not yet felt the heavy weight of that power which they had provoked.

Besides these motives, there were others equally well-founded and warrantable. When people are guilty

guilty of rebellion without just causes, government has not only a right to punish, but to derive some benefit from the punishment, as an atonement to the community, and as an indemnification for the damages it may have sustained. Both these would be given up, were Britain to desist from the pursuit of the measures wherein she was now so deeply engaged.

It was the duty of government not only to chastise the refractory, but to reward its adherents.—These two maxims were the fundamental support of all good government. It was by relaxing in the one, and neglecting the other, that disturbances commonly arose. The obstreperousness of the multitude could never be effectually curbed without making examples of the promoters of sedition; the more expeditiously this was done, the sooner, it was evident, an end would be put to insurrections, and to the unhappy necessity of multiplying punishments.

When people were not to be ruled by fair means, they deserved compulsory treatment. This was the case of the Americans. Now was the time to rivet their submission, without leaving it in their power ever again to attempt any resistance. Their disposition and their principles were experimentally such, that it was nugatory to trust to treaties for a permanency of peace in that country. Nothing but force would keep them in subjection from this day: they would remain wavering and unfixed in their obedience, until they had learned by experience that Britain was able to enforce it.

This force, and this ability, were now in the hands of Britain. Would she be so ill advised as to throw them away unemployed? She had, at a vast expence duly prepared herself for the arduous trial imposed upon her by her rebellious subjects. Ought she not, by exerting properly the formidable power

she

she now possessed, to extinguish the propensity, by eradicating the very means and possibility to cause any more rebellions?

The present situation of Britain required that she should not recede. The government was in treaty with foreign Princes for the hire of considerable forces. what a figure should we make in their eyes, if after settling the terms with them, we should break our agreement? Would they not have reason to tax us with fickleness and tergiversation,—with ~~gross~~ want of spirit and perseverance? Would they not represent us as a people void of all firmness and consistency in our plans, and unworthy of confidence? Should this country hereafter need assistance of this kind, from whom could it be asked or expected?

As it would therefore be a national degradation to deceive those, who relying on our determination and good faith, had engaged to supply us with troops; so it would be an argument of tameness and timidity, to shrink from the resolution we had so loudly proclaimed of chastising the insolence of our revolted Colonists. All Europe was waiting for the execution of our threats; and it would lower us still more in the estimation of the world, to desist from, than to fail in the attempt. We should be accused of weakness and imbecility in our councils, and should lose that esteem and respect in foreign courts, which the proudest of them cannot refuse to a spirited, though unsuccessful people; but which the most insignificant will deny to a state that acts with timorousness and inconsistency.

What now remained to be done, was perhaps less difficult than what had preceded. It was no easy task to throw off the remembrance of those ties that linked us to a nation, which, though seated on the other side of the Atlantic, was a part of ourselves. Like a parent whose feelings suspend the punishment of an undutiful child, we had borne

for years the refractoriness and disobedience of our Colonies, from an earnest desire and hope that they would return to their duty. Necessity had at length overcome our reluctance to exercise our resentment. We were convinced of the propriety of delaying it no longer; and having, against our inclination, our temper, and our wishes, brought ourselves to this indispensable measure, we ought in wisdom, and justice to our dearest interests, steadily to persist in it, however displeasing and repugnant to our feelings.

It was therefore incumbent on us, now we had begun, to make the Americans sensible of the superior dignity of the British nation, and to impress them at the same time with the terror of our arms. The first would be effected by continuing firmly to insist upon their accepting of the terms we had offered; the second, by pursuing vigorously the measures that had been resolved upon to enforce them.

Another motive presented itself, highly deserving of consideration. The language of the ministry had for a long time past held out to the nation the fullest ideas and expectations of war: the spirit of the people had been roused accordingly, and they were now prepared for action. The armaments that were fitting out, the forces that were raising, had put an end to the pacific disposition that had so long governed their minds in all matters relating to America; they too began to think, as well as the government, that it was time to assert the sovereignty of Great Britain over her Colonies. Even those who did not heartily coincide with the ministerial views, did not imagine, that after making such immense preparations, it would argue much prudence in them to retract their determinations. This would subject them to the censure of all parties: the friends to America would blame them for the heavy charges they had brought upon the public,

unnecessary.

unnecessarily, and when, without incurring the least expence, a sincere and speedy reconciliation might have been effected between Great Britain and her Colonies. They would be then accused of incapacity, and of having neglected the due means of ending the discord so long subsisting between them.

In the mean time were America to resume her operations of resistance, as they were entirely persuaded would be the case on the very first occasion, they would be universally loaded with reproaches, for having suffered the critical moment to pass when the strength of the nation was collected, and its spirit animated by a variety of motives, to exert its most resolute endeavours, and to strain every nerve in order to compel America to submit to the terms imposed by Great Britain.

Now, therefore, was the fortunate opportunity of making the most of the courage and resources of this country. The temper of the people was favourable; every thing was ready to second it that depended upon the care of government. Were ministry to be tardy, or to betray any symptom of change in their system, the public would be disappointed in the highest degree, and would be totally disgusted at such uncertainty and fluctuation in their rulers: they would withdraw their confidence from them; and should these, on a conviction of their mistake, return to the system they had forsaken, they would, in all likelihood, find no supporters of their measures from the mistrust they would have drawn upon themselves, through their want of firmness and constancy.

It was clear from every proof that could be looked upon as valid, that a large majority of the British nation coincided with the views of government: Addresses came up from all quarters of the kingdom, warmly decisive in favour of the most determined and active measures against America. While

the sense of the nation was so general and so positive in its concurrence with the conduct adopted by ministry, these would be guilty of a most unpardonable error if they omitted to improve so auspicious an opportunity of accompanying the execution of their designs with all the energy and extent of which it was susceptible, and of securing the completest success to them, so far as it was possible to confer such a security on transactions wherein fortune, after all the exertions of human wisdom, would still have the final decision.

Such were the motives alledged, in vindication of the refusal to give any answer to the petition from Congress. No incident whatever, since the beginning of the contest, occasioned more censure on the part of opposition, and was justified with more warmth on the other.

One of the most unhappy consequences of the fatal quarrel between Great Britain and her Colonies, was, that it revived that spirit of party which had been in some measure suppressed since the accession of the present royal family to the Throne of these kingdoms. It had long been imagined that the distinction of Whig and Tory had been dropped for ever, and that whatever altercations might arise, these nominal badges would never again come into use to mark the respective contestants.

But this unhappy æra seemed, as it were, designed to recall them from oblivion with their attendant evils; the violence and inveteracy that marked the civil dissensions in England, during the latter years of Queen Anne, after laying dormant upwards of sixty years, were now renewed with no less vehemence and fury. One would have thought, from the bitterness and rancour that attended the continual bickerings, daily taking place between private individuals, that not only America, but

England

England itself, would at length become a scene of mutual hostilities.

The tories were accused of promoting those sanguinary addresses, as they were called, which encouraged the ravaging of America, and the shedding of the blood of their fellow subjects for asserting their liberties : they, it was said, were the great misinformed of government : the false representations they were studiously procuring from all quarters, of the temper and inclinations of the community, had more than any other cause contributed to feed the flame of civil war.

Their attachment to the Stuart family, and to those principles which the Princes of that name had so notoriously fostered to their own perdition, was eradicable from them, notwithstanding the dreadful consequences which the upholding of these pernicious principles had produced, both to themselves and to those in favour of whom they maintained them with so much obstinacy.

England had, through their unfortunate machinations, been made a field of blood in the last century, and had been perpetually tottering on the brink of ruin from the period of the restoration till that of the revolution ; when the more sensible part of the nation, wearied out with such incessant attempts to enslave them, took the resolution to expel an ill-advised monarch, whom the fate of his father could not prevent from treading in the same steps that brought him to ruin.

* The tories, it was said, were a race of men whom experience could not cure. They had beheld reiterated proofs of the mischief unavoidably resulting from their maxims ; and yet they adhered to them with as much constancy, as if they had been productive of the greatest benefits.

Whenever the evil star of England had suffered them to predominate, disgrace had been the certain consequence

consequence abroad, and dissention at home. The only object they ever had in view, was the establishment and propagation of their tenets : so zealous were they in these matters, that they laboured for them alone : the honour and interest of the nation were entirely out of their thoughts : these they would readily sacrifice for the accomplishment of their schemes. Without expatiating on subjects that had filled the kingdom with indignation, it was sufficient to remind the public of the fatal epocha of the peace of Utrecht, when, after waging a triumphant war of twelve years, and rescuing Europe from the despotic influence and controul of France, all the advantages that might have been obtained, were lost by those feuds which they occasioned through their restless endeavours to compass the iniquitous projects they had formed.

Those, on the other hand, who were branded with the appellation of tories, retorted all these reproaches with the utmost acrimony of language and argument. The whigs, said they, were the genuine descendants and representatives of those republican incendiaries, who had in the last century overturned the constitution, and desolated the kingdom. Under pretence of asserting the liberty of the subject, they meant no more than to engross all authority to themselves, and to oust every man who differed from them in opinion : an impartial examination of their conduct in the unhappy times alluded to, would prove this beyond the power of refutation.

The zeal displayed by the whigs for government, had never been real and patriotic ; it was purely in support of their own people and measures. They opposed all those who disapproved of their principles, whatever merit they could plead, or whatever abilities they possessed. Sooner than miss of their aims, they would involve the realm in confusion.

They boasted of the revolution, and of the settlement of the crown upon the Princes of the House of Hanover; but both these were the joint deeds of the whole nation. While their faction was uppermost, they were as tyrannical in maintaining themselves in the seat of authority, as those whom they taxed with being the favourers of absolute monarchy. Who were the framers of the riot act? Who were the establishers of septennial parliaments but the whigs alone, in opposition to the repeated remonstrances and clamours of the tories? Were these, in the veriest height of their power, ever guilty of such glaring encroachments as the last, upon the freedom of this country?

The tories, as their enemies affected to call them, were the true and substantial friends to English freedom, which consisted in preserving the constitution duly poised; in partitioning power between king and people, and leaving to each his own share. But the whigs coveted the whole power of the state, and would trust the crown with hardly any more than the appearance and trappings of royalty: they assigned to it, in short, the mere shadow, and reserved the substance for themselves. What was this but substituting an aristocracy in place of a monarchy? Could this be called maintaining the constitution? Was it not, in fact, laying the axe to its very root? Was it not centering the sovereignty in the hands of a faction? For what is aristocracy but the combination of a particular set of individuals, who have agreed to support each other in governing exclusively the residue of the community?

In the present dispute, the great and principal object of decision was, whether King and Parliament united were to be obeyed or resisted: the tories declared for obedience, the whigs for resistance. This was the true state of the question, and not whether

whether the tories or the whigs were the sincerest friends to the public.

Had the Crown, in the present unhappy contest, acted independently of Parliament, or in contradiction to its advice or consent, then indeed the whigs would have had reason to complain ; but nothing of this kind was alledged. The King and the Parliament acted with an unanimity, that afforded not the slightest pretence for clamouring against any invasion of popular rights. If the whigs were displeased at the perfect concord of sentiments that subsisted between the sovereign and the majority of his people, as represented in Parliament, they were at full liberty to show, by dint of argument and reasoning, if such a thing were practicable, that the king and the nation were both mistaken in their politics, and that themselves only apprehended things rightly. The field was open to them for such a discussion ; they had indeed often entered the lists ; but had not hitherto been able to convict their opponents of mismanagement, any more than to gain them over to their way of thinking.

The truth was, therefore, that two parties subsisted in the nation ; the one was of opinion that the Colonies owed obedience to Great Britain in all cases whatsoever ; and in case of refusal, ought to be compelled to pay it : the other, though it acknowledged the same obligation in the Colonies, thought it was unadvisable to enforce it. In a question of such importance, the only constitutional method of deciding, was by an appeal to Parliament. That appeal had been made ; and Parliament had determined for compulsion. Such a decision ought to be considered as the voice of the nation. Were a parliamentary majority to be viewed in any other light, all things would fall into confusion, and no rule of government would remain.

Yet it was this very plurality of votes which

the opposition strove with all its might to represent as undeserving of obedience; for such was the evident and unquestionable aim of all their arguments and representations. Their partisans had the audacity to stile those men tories, who maintained the justness of complying with the will of the legislature. But if such were the maxims of the whigs, let impartial men pronounce the sentence between them and the tories, and laying their hands upon their hearts, conscientiously decide, which of the two were the strictest observers of the laws of their country.

As it was scandalous, therefore, to stigmatize men for differing in sentiments, it was still more iniquitous to defame them for complying with the regulations prescribed by the wisdom of the community, for the maintenance of good order. The very essence of liberty consisted in submission to no authority that was not enforced by a superiority of suffrages. To endeavour at an invalidation of such authority, whether by open or indirect means, was consequently an attack upon the constitution, little differing from treason, as it tended manifestly to a breach of the public peace, and to render people refractory and seditious.

These heavy retorts did not pass unanswered. As they fell upon a numerous body, a multitude of champions started up in defence of the principles of the Whig party. These principles, it was said, were either misunderstood, or misrepresented by the Tories. The true Whigs were more intent on the substantial preservation of liberty, than on the formal mode of doing it. They little valued what name was given to that body of men by whom public freedom was upheld, whether Parliament or People. If a Parliament was to become so corrupt as to betray its constituents, it was the height of absurdity to contend, that these

in matters of such consequence. But here again the Tories appeared in their true light, in ascribing exclusive and indivisible power to that body of men. It was precisely in this point they differed chiefly from the Whigs. These acknowledged the Parliament to be no more than a deputation from the people, to consult about, and manage their affairs with more convenience than it was possible for them to do. An idea of this kind destroyed at once those claims of omnipotence, so strongly and unwarrantably bestowed upon that assembly. According to this idea, the members that composed it were the deputies, and not the absolute rulers of the people; they had no rights but in common with their constituents, such formalities excepted, as were necessary for the due transaction of the business with which they were intrusted.

Such, it was said, was the doctrine taught by the Whigs. It was indeed totally repugnant to that inculcated by the Tories. These, by their practice, seemed to be of opinion, that a Parliamentary election conferred on individuals rights almost similar to those which the partizans of passive obedience had ascribed to Kings. They participated absolute power in conjunction with the Crown, and were not to be resisted nor controuled upon any account. But who did not see, that if such a tenet was admitted, slavery might be as completely established as under an arbitrary monarch? A conformity of opinion in a sufficient number to constitute a majority, was experimentally found to be not difficult to purchase. It was not therefore such a majority that common sense would ever allow to be the fair and unbiased interpreter of the genuine mind of a nation.

For the sake of public tranquility, it was undoubtedly advisable to refrain from violence in opposing the undue measures countenanced by the majority, unless indeed they were pregnant with instant

instant and intolerable mischiefs; but it did not follow from thence, that individuals were not at liberty to reprobate them with the utmost explicitness and indignation, whenever they appeared contrary to the interest of the community.

Such, it was said, in contradiction to what had been asserted by the Tories, was the real character of the Whigs. The former now complained that obedience was refused to the legislature of Great Britain by its own subjects. The latter, upon maturest reflection, denied that in the present instance the right of legislating was vested in those who assumed it; and that were it otherwise, the enforcement of such a right would be attended with so many evils, that no prudent men, much less any true friends to liberty, would insist upon it.

The general reply to the supporters of whig principles was, that these were not admissible in sound policy. They were plausible in theory, but destructive in practice. Authority, sovereign and uncontrouled, must necessarily reside somewhere; and allowing every insinuation of bribery, and corruption to be true, it were still better to be governed, in some instances, through their influence, than to have no government at all. This must, in fact, prove the case, were continual appeals to be made to the people, the unavoidable consequence of which would be perpetual broils at home, necessarily followed by disasters and misfortunes abroad.

In the midst of the ferment occasioned by this clashing of parties, those classes whose representations have naturally the most weight in a commercial country, were full of alarm and terror. It had been expressed as a well-founded hope, during the last session of Parliament, that the bill for depriving the people of New England of the benefits of the fishery at Newfoundland, would prove highly interesting to Great

Britain, by throwing into her hands alone the profits that were heretofore divided between her and the Colonies. But this expectation was disappointed in the most signal manner. The number of ships fitted out for that fishery was little more considerable than usual. When they arrived on the Banks of Newfoundland, they found themselves arrested in their operations by the prohibition to supply them with any necessaries, which was made by the Congress, in retaliation of the act to prevent the Colonies from fishing. This threw them into such a state of confusion and distress as they had never before experienced: not only the shipping, but those who were settled on the shores of Newfoundland, were in immediate danger of perishing by famine. Instead of prosecuting the business they came upon, many of the ships were constrained to make the best of their way to every place where provisions could be procured. From these, and other causes that have been already mentioned, the profits of this fishery, far from increasing this season, had suffered, according to a computation made at that time, a diminution of near five hundred thousand pounds.

In addition to the obstructions thrown by the Americans in the way of this trade, some natural causes co-operated, which by the more serious among those who favoured the Americans, were looked upon as a sort of interposition from above, and a punishment upon those who had sentenced them to a deprivation of that sustenance which Providence seemed to have marked out as their peculiar property. A storm uncommonly terrible visited these latitudes during the fishing season. It was attended with circumstances unusually dreadful and destructive. The sea rose, according to report, full thirty feet above its ordinary level; this happened so suddenly, that no time was given to prepare against its effects. More than seven hundred fishing-boats perished,

perished, together with the people in them ; and some ships foundered with their whole crews. The devastation was hardly less on shore ; the waters broke in upon the land beyond all their usual bounds, and occasioned vast loss and destruction.

These various accidents made a powerful impression upon the minds of the multitude. It seemed as if fortune had determined to frown upon Britain in every quarter. When people laid together the events that had happened within the short period of a twelvemonth, and compared them with the views and intentions of those against whom they militated in so apparent and striking a manner, numbers hardly knew to what cause they should attribute so many disasters, whether to the iniquity, or to the imprudence of the schemes in agitation.

Petitions were now renewed with as much fervour and earnestness as ever against the further prosecution of hostilities. The cities of London and Bristol were, as usual, foremost in this line. They represented the inutility of all the attempts that had hitherto been made to reduce the Colonies to a compliance with the terms so often proposed. Restriction and coercion had equally failed ; and the Colonies had now exerted themselves in such a manner, and had made such preparations for their defence, that were it practicable to overcome them, the danger and the expence of such an undertaking were far beyond any possible benefit that could attend it. Rivers of blood must be shed, and debts incurred that would inevitably bring the nation to a state of debility, from which it would be many years in recovering. Meanwhile foreign states would not lose sight of our distractions ; they would improve those opportunities of thriving which we were throwing into their hands ; they would lie in wait to seize upon those branches which we should be necessarily obliged to neglect, and which, when

once fallen into their possession, it would be very difficult, if possible to regain.

Were the Americans to continue their resistance as they had begun, the subduing of them would be the work of years. They seemed obstinately bent never to yield but to actual force; in which case, if we meant to carry our point, we must match their obstinacy, and doom them to utter destruction.— But what would result from so dreadful a resolution, were we to execute it, but their ruin, added to our own? What would it avail Britain to possess a desolated country, of which the inhabitants would be unable to repay it for those requisites that would be wanted to restore it to any tolerable condition? The more the consequences of this fatal dispute were considered, the less it deserved prosecution: it were even more consistent with the interest of Britain to abandon America, than to retain it at such a rate.

As the employment of foreign troops to reduce the Colonies was now a measure publicly mentioned, the petitioners did not fail to animadvert upon it in the most poignant and severe terms. The European nations would now, said they, load this nation with taunts and reproaches, and represent it as so immersed in effeminacy, as to want courage and vigour to repress its revolted dependencies. Nothing, it would be said, was left us but money and pride. Degeneracy and tyranny would be the colours with which our many open and secret enemies would draw our character; nor indeed would ground be wanting for such an accusation.

Such was the purport of the petitions, and still more of the discourses held on this irksome subject. As it became daily more important, from the uncertainty how it would terminate, and the apprehension that its termination would rather be fatal to this country, people began to feel an interest in the controversy, of which, while it had gone no further

ther than complaints and menaces, they did not seem duly susceptible.

An argument, of which the advocates of the Americans made powerful use at this time, to enforce the sincerity of their disposition to be reconciled, was the large remittances that have been mentioned, made to this country in various articles, for the payment of their debts, and their abundant importations of corn, when our exportations to them were at an end. These were alledged as strong motives to treat them with lenity, and to have recourse to friendly negotiations, rather than to force.

The considerations recommended in the multiplicity of remonstrances and petitions that were now making, received no small assistance from the retrospection of the inefficacy of the measures pursued in America, and the unabated constancy with which the opposition, both in and out of Parliament, stood out against the designs of the ministry. The backwardness that was no less visible among the commonalty to engage in a war against their fellow-subjects, was also a material discouragement; as, though individually unimportant, yet the clamours of a discontented multitude could not pass altogether unregarded.

People indeed were highly displeased at the repulse of the British military, and the ill success that had attended their operations; but this disposition was chiefly found among those, who from their education, harboured a sense of national honour.—It did not pervade the generality with sufficient animation and energy for the purposes that were now proposed.

In the mean time, as a very considerable strength would be needed to carry those extensive plans into execution which the ministry had formed, and was inflexibly determined upon, it was now deemed expedient to borrow the assistance of foreign arms for the re-

duction of America. Difficulties of several kinds seemed to threaten a defeat to this scheme, but it was not doubted that means would be found to surmount them : the treasures of Great Britain were an allurement that few Princes in Europe could withstand.

On the strength of this powerful motive, the British ministry applied to several of the petty courts of Germany, a country famous for producing hardy men, and good soldiers, and of which the many sovereigns were not disinclined to hire out their subjects for pecuniary emoluments.

In the present case, however, the prospect of the distance and danger, were no small obstacles in the way of obtaining their consent. An immense tract of sea was to be crossed ; this alone offered a multitude of perils to encounter. When arrived at the place of their destination, it became an object of serious consideration, whether the same motives that had of late years occasioned so many emigrations from Germany to this part of the world, would not operate on the minds of the troops now sent thither so effectually, as to induce great numbers of them to desert to the Americans. This would prove a double detriment, by weakening the force intended to subdue them, and adding it to their own.—Another pernicious consequence would follow in the total and irretrievable loss of so many subjects : this latter was an object least of any to be overlooked by Princes who made a traffic of letting them out.

Besides these reflections, which naturally occurred to these Princes, their very subjects, however obsequious and passive, were startled at the proposal of being transported across the ocean, into another world, there to be exposed to all the miseries of war, with very precarious hopes of ever returning to their country.

Exclusive

Exclusive of these German auxiliaries, others were also mentioned. The Russian troops, now deservedly celebrated for their late victories over the Turks, were included in the idea of those foreigners who were to be employed upon the American continent. The assistance which that nation had derived from the naval skill and bravery of numbers of British officers and sailors, was looked upon as a just motive to expect the concurrence of that Court in the schemes on foot in that of Great Britain.

Holland itself was recurred to on this occasion. As its pacific disposition for many years rendered the foreign troops in its service of no absolute use, application was made for that body of Scotch troops which has been of so long standing in that country. But two powerful causes militated against this application. The politics of Great Britain respecting America, were considered in Holland as erroneous in the highest degree. They would compel the Colonies to throw themselves into the arms of France, and to add thereby to the strength of a power, already too formidable for England and Holland not to be alarmed at its further increase: the less encouragement, therefore, the British ministry met with in the prosecution of its imprudent schemes, the sooner it would be obliged to drop them.

The other cause was not less weighty. America was represented as precisely in the same situation the United Provinces were in two centuries before, at the period of their formation into a Republic. The Americans were struggling for that liberty, which the Dutch had contended for much in the same manner. The similitude in a variety of instances was striking and impressive. It would therefore be highly improper in a state that had set the Americans so conspicuous an example of resistance, to be aiding in punishing them for having followed its example.

This argument was peculiarly insisted upon, and placed in the strongest light possible by some members of the States General, whose enmity to England has since declared itself in a more open and explicit manner. They began even then to entertain hopes of availing themselves, in due time, of these dissensions, to mature that project of overturning the British interest in Holland, which the French faction had so long been aiming to compass, and now thought an opportunity would ere long be afforded of destroying for ever.

Holland and France were indeed the two countries that espoused, with more warmth than any other, the cause of America. Pamphlets were continually publishing at Amsterdam in justification of the Colonies : their case was circumstantially compared with that of the Netherlands in former days ; and they were warmly exhorted to persevere in defence of their claims, against the pretensions of the British nation.

Great Britain, too, was represented as insatiably covetous of wealth and power, and as grasping at all that lay within a possibility of seizing. She was taxed with a domineering disposition, that had, since her successes in the late war, become intolerable to all her neighbours, and, in truth, to the whole world. She had even, in the course of that very war, exercised an absolute sovereignty at sea, and did not scruple to avow a right and title to rule over that element.

It was the common interest of all Europe to put an end to these imperious pretensions. An opportunity now offered, such as might never again be given : it was favourable in the highest degree, as it arose from internal dissensions, which would weaken that ambitious power so effectually, that there was no reason to doubt she would, through them,

them, become utterly unable to maintain her unjust claims any longer.

Her Colonies therefore ought to be vigorously supported, and induced, not only to refuse submission to her demands, but even to cast off her authority, and assume the rank of independent states. Unless this were thoroughly accomplished, it was in vain to look forwards with any certainty of being secure from her naval despotism. Were a reconciliation to take place between Great Britain and her Colonies, they would, for their mutual interest, agree to a final and decisive settlement of their respective rights ; this would at once preclude all possibility of future disputes, in which case the union that would be formed between them, would become indissoluble ; and, what Europe ought most seriously to consider, would become formidable in the most alarming degree, and able alone to balance the whole maritime strength of the universe.

Such were the remonstrances of the political individuals in France and Holland. As there was undoubtedly truth in them, they made a due impression, and were attended to by many a potentate. They contributed gradually to strengthen that inimical disposition to Britain, which had already begun to take root, and the effects of which appeared not long after to the great detriment of this country.

In the mean while, the old allies of Britain, confiding in that honour and liberality which they had experienced from her in the war they had lately waged under her banners, thought proper to accede to her demands. These were the Princes of the Houses of Hesse, and of Brunswick, who, with some other German Princes of inferior note, furnished her with a considerable number of troops.

In order, at the same time, that as many British forces as possible might be employed in the business proposed, large drafts were made from the garrisons of

of Gibraltar and Minorca, which were replaced by an equal proportion of men out of the military establishment in the Electorate of Hanover.

The expences incurred in the prosecution of this war, began to occasion universal alarm. It had been expected that a British army would have remained in sufficient possession of the field, to have commanded the supplies of fresh provisions necessary for the demands of the military. But it could neither keep the field, nor procure them at any rate. In so calamitous a situation, it behoved those under whose auspices they acted, that so many brave men should not perish for want.

To do the ministry justice, it exerted itself on this occasion, in a manner that will never be forgotten; and that deservedly recommended it to the attachment of those in favour of whom these exertions were made. The enumeration of what was shipped for the troops at Boston, amounted to five thousand live oxen, and fourteen thousand sheep, with a proportionable number of hogs, all sorts of vegetables in prodigious quantities, and prepared with infinite care in order to preserve them; ten thousand butts of strong beer, and five thousand chaldron of coals.

The purchase and shipping of these and various other necessaries, amounted to an immense sum. The very articles of oats, hay, and beans, for a regiment of light horse in Boston, was computed at twenty thousand pounds. Those of vinegar, vegetables, and casks, at no less. All the rest was in proportion. Besides these heavy charges, the contingencies occasioned by military operations arose to near five hundred thousand pounds. Such amazing disbursements to supply a force that was far from considerable, and whose sphere of action was circumscribed to the meer duties of a garrison, astonished all people, and made them very anxious for

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the issue of a contest, the commencements of which were so burthensome.

In consequence of these prodigious expences, the price of all things was proportionably raised. That of shipping particularly rose one fourth in the ton. The profits made by contractors and their numerous connexions were much complained of ; but the multitudes who benefited, on the other hand, in the infinite variety of branches through which the public service was carried on, seemed in some measure to atone for, and countenance this profusion of treasure.

But these uncommon exertions were, by the general fatality of the times, doomed to be of small service. What from inattention, or inexpertness, want of due care, and delays, it was so late in the year before the transports were in readiness for sailing, that their voyages were lost. They remained long wind-bound, and after leaving port, they met with such stormy weather, that instead of being able to proceed, they were tossed to and fro in the Channel, and lost most of the live stock they had on board, before they could clear the coast of England. Nor even then did they meet with more favourable circumstances. Their progress was retarded by a continuance of bad weather : when arrived on the coast of America, the winds, periodical in those latitudes, drove them again to sea. Some were forced away as far as the West Indies ; others, after beating along the shore, were captured by the American privateers, who were uncommonly active as soon as they received intelligence of their having sailed from the English harbours. An inconsiderable number reached Boston at last, after plying near four months on the seas. But the provisions they brought were damaged ; and out of the prodigious quantity, that had been collected in England,

land, but a wretched remnant was landed in America.

Awakened by the sufferings of the garrison at Boston, a subscription was set on foot towards the close of the year, for the relief of the soldiers, and the families of those that had died in the service. The subscription was liberal upon the whole; but numbers refused to contribute, from their disapprobation of the measures which it was calculated to encourage, and in which they would have thought themselves guilty of participating, by countenancing those who were employed to execute them. Some disapproved of it, as an ignominious manner of supporting the military profession, which ought never to become an object of compassion. No few most bitterly complained that an injudicious application had been made of the money that had been appropriated for the American service; and that with due economy it would have abundantly sufficed for all the wants and demands of the forces there.

The season for the meeting of Parliament was now approaching; and it was universally expected that party divisions would become more violent than ever. Rumours of combinations in favour of the Americans were frequent, and that they were privately abetted by the advice and correspondence; and assisted by the purses of personages of high rank and importance. These reports spread much alarm throughout the nation, and greatly exasperated those who looked upon the Americans as rebels. They could not hear, without the utmost wrath and indignation, that any man in this country should dare to support them in so treasonable a manner.

It has often been made a matter of discussion, whence these surmises first arose, as no discovery of such practices was ever made, notwithstanding the many hints and suspicions that were given and taken

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at this busy period. It is most probable that they originated in the vain conjectures of idle and uninformed people, and were propagated by the weak and credulous, who seldom fail to exaggerate matters of this kind, till at last they gain ground, and, by imperceptible additions, become objects of public attention.

The opening of the session was marked by an extraordinary instance of this nature. Mr. Sayre, a gentleman born in America, and at this time a banker in London, was committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason. It was at first generally imagined, that remittances of money had passed through his hands from the disaffected in England to their friends in America. But the particulars of the charge were of quite another sort. He was accused of as bold and daring a conspiracy as ever was framed in this country. His design, it was said, was to seize the King, as he went in state to Parliament, to carry him to the Tower, and thence to convey him out of the kingdom, and in the mean time to alter the form of government.

In order to effect all this, a sum of money was to be distributed among some of the serjeants of the Guards, who with part of it were to bribe those men in whom they could confide for such a purpose. While one party secured the King's person, another was to have seized upon the Tower for his reception. No other preparations were mentioned for executing the further intentions proposed respecting either King or government.

It was alledged, in vindication of Mr. Sayre's commitment on this strange accusation, that the charge was clear and positive; and that however, absurd, still such an attempt might be made. The information being given to a secretary of state in his official capacity, he could not consistently with his duty, forbear to proceed upon it according to the

usual forms, however he might think it improbable or false: the royal person was so sacred, that it should be guarded from the remotest possibility of danger.

The conduct of the secretary of state was allowed to be justifiable in point of law, but there were many who questioned the propriety of it, in regard to prudence and good policy. It was said, that the imprisonment, and possible ruin of an individual, ought not to have preceded a close and candid investigation of a charge attended with such glaring and palpable improbability.

The news of this transaction alarmed the whole kingdom more than any event that had yet happened since the King's accession to the throne. Numbers began to be persuaded, that the plots and machinations so much insisted upon of late, were well founded, and that this was a prelude to many others.

The confinement of Mr. Sayre was very strict and severe. No person had access to him but his wife, and this indulgence was not obtained without difficulty. He did not however remain long in this situation; at the expiration of five days, he was brought by an habeas before the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who, upon inquiring into the matter, admitted him to bail, upon a trifling security for his appearance to answer to the charge. But as no prosecution ensued, and the bail was discharged, of course, he then sued the secretary of state for unlawful imprisonment, and was by a jury adjudged a thousand pounds damages.

The session of Parliament was opened in the meantime with a speech from the throne, complaining of the misrepresentations that had been used in America to seduce the people into a system of opinions repugnant to the true constitution of the Colonies, and to their subordinate relation to Great Britain.

Britain. They had now proceeded so far as to avow an open resistance, and to seize the whole powers of government into their own hands. While they endeavoured to delude with specious professions of loyalty, they had in fact no other view than to establish an independent empire in America. But it was to be hoped the spirit of the British nation was too high, and its resources too numerous, tamely to acquiesce in the loss of what had been acquired with so much toil, nursed with such care, and protected at so great an expence of blood and treasure. A full exertion of these resources was now required. In the mean time, as clemency would be preferred to punishment, in order to prevent the inconveniences which might arise from the great distance of the Colonies, and to remove as soon as possible, the calamities which they suffered, authority would be given to certain persons upon the spot, to grant general or particular pardons and indemnities, in such manner, and to such persons as they should think fit; to receive the submission of any Province or Colony which should be disposed to return to its allegiance, and to restore it to the free exercise of its commerce, and to the same protection and security as if it had never revolted.

The address that was proposed by the ministerial party in answer to this speech, adopted its intent in every point: but it met with a severe opposition, which did not however prevent its being carried, like those in the preceding sessions.

A nobleman of great rank and influence in the minority, moved, that instead of concurring in such an address, a declaration should be presented, the purport of which should be, that the House beheld with the utmost concern the disorders and dissents in the Colonies rather increased, than diminished, by the means that had been used to suppress and allay them; a circumstance alone sufficient to give

give reason to fear, that those means were not originally well considered, or properly adapted to their ends : that they were satisfied by experience, that the misfortune had in a great measure arisen from the want of full and perfect information of the true state and condition of the Colonies by reason of which, measures injurious and ineffectual had been carried into execution, tending to tarnish the lustre of the British arms, to bring discredit on his Majesty's councils, and to nourish, without hope of end, a most unhappy civil war.

That deeply impressed with the melancholy state of public concerns, they would, in the fullest information they could obtain, and with the maturest deliberation they could employ, review the whole of the late proceedings, that they might be enabled to discover, as they would be most willing to apply, the most effectual means of restoring order to the distracted affairs of the British empire, confidence to his Majesty's government, obedience, by a prudent and temperate use of its powers, to the authority of Parliament, and satisfaction and happiness to all his people ; that by these means they trust to avoid any occasion of having recourse to the alarming and dangerous expedient of calling in foreign forces to the support of his Majesty's authority within his own dominions, and the still more dreadful calamity of shedding British blood by British arms.

Long and serious debates were occasioned by this motion, accompanied with the utmost strength and vehemence of language. The speech was examined with great freedom and severity by the members in opposition. Ministry was accused of having placed the monarch of Great Britain in a more difficult and dishonourable situation than any Prince in Europe.

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He was no longer the sovereign of America; he had lost half his dominions, and the other half was filled with discontent and dissension. Corruption and venality were the instruments by which the kingdom was ruled; otherwise it could not have been brought to so deplorable a condition. From the most flourishing state in the universe, it was now become one of the most unfortunate. All public virtue was lost; no sentiments were cherished but those of the meanest selfishness; every possible encouragement was held out to sacrifice the interest of the realm to the views of such as were unable and unworthy of governing it: these had by their destructive maxims, involved the nation in a most pernicious contest, that would, if pursued, prove the infallible ruin of the British empire. It was founded upon haughtiness, tyranny, and imprudence; all three concurred so manifestly in supporting it, that no man, unless destitute of all feelings of justice, enslaved by the most venal profligacy, or totally void of understanding, could have been prevailed upon to give it any countenance.—So sudden and instantaneous a destruction of a great and mighty power, could not be paralleled in history. The very outset of this fatal quarrel had already severed a greater extent of territory from Britain, than had by the most rapid conquest ever yet known, been lost in so short a time, and unexpected a manner.

The charge of aiming at independence, so continually imputed to the Colonies had no real foundation. It was a supposition which indeed our conduct might induce them to realize; but they had hitherto firmly denied it, by every affirmation which is held solemn and binding in society, and had equally refuted it by their deeds. Whoever understood the interest, and was acquainted with the temper and inclination of the Americans, knew that

they harboured no such wishes. But if we persisted in the execution of plans so odious to them, it could not be expected, that men so naturally impatient of oppression, would not prefer independence to a connection that brought slavery upon them. If England meant to retain them, it must allow them the rights of Englishmen, otherwise they would secure the continuance of them by a total separation from this country : a measure which no man in his right mind could blame them for, as herein they would act according to the dictates of strict justice, and in perfect conformity to the maxims of that constitution, which they and their forefathers had so long been taught to consider as the best and wisest that ever was framed for the government of mankind.

They were accused of professing attachment and loyalty with no other intention than to deceive, and gain time for the more secure accomplishment of their designs against this country : but this imputation was easily answered by the constant tenour of all their proposals and representations. Instead of leading the British ministry into wrong notions of their intentions, they had, without the least reserve or equivocation, told them in the plainest language that words could form, that they would by no means submit to the terms held out to them ; this they had invariably done from the commencement of this unhappy altercation : they had, in short, acted the part of men ; they had spoken their minds, and kept their words ; they had threatened resistance if we proceeded to force. Having embraced this as our last resource, they had of course employed the other. Of what therefore could we complain, but of not believing them in time, of thinking meanly and injuriously of them, and in that persuasion of having adopted a system which experience had shown was erroneous in every respect ?—

Ministry

Ministry could not pretend they had been imposed upon by specious representations in any stage of the business. The truth was, they fully understood the Americans, but they undervalued their character, and despised their menaces : they promised themselves an easy victory over such men as their ideas depicted them ; the methods of compulsion were proportioned to these ideas ; and now that they were found inadequate, an exculpation was sought, by throwing the blame of deception and falsehood upon people, who, instead of deceiving and misleading them, had on the contrary, convinced them that they themselves were guilty of the grossest ignorance and infatuation, in persisting to think and hope that the conquest of America was not an enterprize of the greatest difficulty, and would not involve the whole British empire in one common ruin.

But what could be expected of a ministry that was wilfully guilty of an accumulation of errors ? The very first steps they took were unsuccessful ; they equally miscarried in the second, and in the many others which pride and ignorance had dictated ; yet no repulse could overthrow their obstinacy. The consequences of their imprudence were so obvious, that they required no sagacity to be foreseen ; they had been circumstantially predicted, and unhappily for Britain, events had verified the prediction.

Sessions had followed each other in these constant forewarnings on the one hand, and in the most illiberal insinuations on the other. Whoever opposed the ministry, was represented as an enemy to his country,—an abettor of rebellion ; and yet in what did this opposition consist ? In the most fervent intrigues to ponder well on the measures they were framing, to avoid any that might irritate and drive the Americans to desperation ; to beware of any

that would lead to effusion of blood, and profusion of treasure.

The advice and caution recommended by the opposition, were reprobated as the remonstrance of factious men, disappointed in their aims at power, and who thought themselves alone entitled to direct. The knowledge and information at which they pretended, was described as founded on their own conjectures and presumption, and void of reality.

But whence was it that ministry received that intelligence on which they erected the fatal system that now alarmed all parties? From individuals appointed by themselves to superintend the affairs of a people, to whom they were particularly odious; who had long suspected them of secret enmity; who had more than once petitioned for their removal; and who seemed resolved never to acquiesce under the authority of such delegates.

Had men of true wisdom been at the head of administration, would they have continued such individuals in the seats of government over a people by whom they were held in such odium? Would they not have prudently yielded to the discontents of a respectable public, and endeavoured to stifle them by condescension? But instead of recalling these instruments of dissention between Great Britain and her Colonies, they openly cherished and encouraged them, and secretly gave them their confidence. It was by the intelligence they received in their correspondence with men of this description, that ministry had long been guided; these were their informers and directors; actuated by that displeasure and resentment which they felt, on account of the hatred and contempt they experienced from those over whom they ruled, they misrepresented them, and sought to render their dispositions unacceptable to

to government at home, by describing them as stubborn and refractory.

But were the designing and interested representations of official individuals solely and implicitly to be relied upon? Were they not necessarily influenced by views of emolument, to preserve their places by courting their superiors? They well knew the arbitrary turn of these, and humoured it accordingly: they espoused and fed their inclinations and prejudices: they became, in short, the faithful representatives of their masters.

These were the sources from whence flowed a copious measure of those evils that now excited so much complaint. While men of this character were trusted, and made the confidential advisers of those who presided at the head of a nation, what could be expected but deceit and imposition, followed by a train of errors and misconduct, ill fortune and calamity?

The employment of foreign troops to reduce America, was an object animadverted upon by opposition with peculiar violence and indignation. This, indeed, of all the ministerial measures, met with the most acrimonious notice, both in and out of Parliament. It was represented as the completion of the despotic scheme, framed in the minds of imperious Governors, for the total inflavement of an unfortunate people, who had been guilty of resisting their arbitrary authority.

Foreigners, said opposition, were now taught that Britain, with all its boasted greatness, could not find people at home to fight its battles. The success of its projects depended upon the valour of strangers: these were now to draw their swords in its defence, and to be the supporters of its interests and its reputation.

Who could behold so disgraceful a measure, without feeling for that loss of national honour which it

must occasion? All Europe would view it in that light; and we should henceforth suffer the mortification of being reputed much more conversant in the lucrative, than in the honourable arts, and of passing for a people averse to the profession of arms.

But exclusive of the disgrace entailed upon our character, the danger of such a system was no less apparent. What reason had we to trust an army of foreigners, who could possibly harbour no motives of enmity, to the people against whom they were to be employed? We should be very cautious to whom we entrusted our arms in such a quarrel; the country where these foreign succours were to wage war for us, was precisely that to which we had so often inticed numbers to emigrate from their native homes, by promises of more ease and happiness than they could enjoy in their own country. America was, in fact, the promised land, represented by Great Britain to all the European nations, as the seat of freedom and felicity, prepared through her wisdom and care for the reception of all those who were tired of their condition at home, and willing to try their fortune in this new part of the world.

The majority of the soldiers, and many of the officers destined for our assistance, had been bred in rural occupations, and would need very little invitation to quit our standards, and join a community, where they would find security from want and oppression: the prospect of enjoying ease and plenty, was a temptation which no man could resist, who was daily experiencing the reverse, and proffered the means to deliver himself from such a situation.

The Americans themselves were amazed that we should have adopted such a measure. Numbers of the inhabitants in some of the Colonies, were natives of those parts from which these succours were expected: they would not fail to influence many

many of these to come over to their friends and countrymen, and partake of the benefits and comforts of a land that was now become the refuge of all the unfortunate and distressed throughout Europe.

The landed interest was next appealed to. The gentry of England were seriously admonished to consider thoroughly the question now before them. If futurity was to be conjectured by the past, with what hopes of success could they vote for a ministry, that had undeviatingly trod a path of perpetual mischance? Not one measure had succeeded of the many they had recommended; whatever they had proposed and carried had produced either disgrace or calamity; nothing, in a word, prospered which they took in hand. This surely was a valid motive to suspect that something essentially erroneous was at the bottom of their projects.

After failing in so many undertakings, ministry now proposed one of more importance and magnitude than any that had preceded. A mighty army was now to be transported over the ocean to North America; and a fleet no less formidable was to attend it. This numerous body of men were sent to conquer America, every Province of which was under arms, and in daily expectation of the arrival of this terrible armament.

Here, continued opposition, let evry man coolly attend to the respective situation of our people, and of the Americans. These standing on their own ground, and environed by their friends and all the resources of a rich and fertile soil, provided with all the necessaries and comforts of life, at a cheap and easy rate; those at an immense distance from every help, and exposed to all manner of distress without expectation of relief; surrounded by enemies on sea and land, exploring every latitude through which assistance might be brought, and stopping every channel of supply,

In this terrible position, with not an article requisite for the sustenance of life to be drawn from the ground where they are to be stationed, let prudent men reflect on that mass of money which must be expended to find them in the most common and indispensable necessaries : let them reflect that English markets must send them whatever is wanted for their consumption ; and let them not forget, that every article thus procured, must, at an immense price, be sent to them across the Atlantic ocean.

Thus it was clear, that difficulties of every description would attend the expedition that was projected ; and that nothing but success would save the troops from falling into the hands of the Americans. They had no place of retreat ; and no medium was left them, but to defeat the enemy, or to fly for shelter to their ships. This latter was an alternative of so ignominious a nature, that it was not doubted the British troops would endure every sort of hardship, and face every danger, rather than recur to it. In which case it was much to be dreaded, from the greatness of their spirit, that after long striving with insurmountable obstacles, and making the most desperate and fruitless efforts, they would at length, through the destructive consequences necessarily attending the continual exertions of their valour, be so reduced, as to be compelled to give up the contest from absolute inability to prosecute it.

But allowing that the forces intended for America, would be so numerous as to be completely able to keep the field, and repel the Americans, whatever successes were obtained, would probably be purchased at a heavy price. Their knowledge of the country, and their expertness in the manner of fighting resulting from its situation, would always render them a formidable enemy, notwithstanding

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the advantages of discipline and subordination in the British troops. But even these would be of much less utility in America than elsewhere; and those who were the most conversant in European campaigns, would find, on their arrival there, that they would have much more to learn than they had been aware of, before they could be esteemed completely qualified for the business committed to their charge.

In the mean time, however successful they might prove in the field of battle, this would not deprive the Americans either of their courage or activity. It was no more than they expected: they did not give out that they intended to make any regular stand upon even ground, unless the superiority of advantages were so manifest as to insure a victory. They proposed no more than to weary and harass our people by continual skirmishes; a mode of warring in which they were uncommonly skilful, by the quickness and dexterity with which they were known to handle their fire arms. The face of the country was so universally interspersed with woods, rivers, defiles, and strong holds, that they would never be at a loss for advantageous positions, from whence it would be difficult to dislodge them without sacrificing multitudes.

In this manner the war might be protracted for a long space of time, without affording the least hope of a termination. Mean while we could not flatter ourselves with uninterrupted success: they too might hope to meet with lucky days, with this difference in their favour, that a repulse or a defeat of the British troops, could not be repaired with equal celerity as among them, who might instantly be recruited from a variety of quarters; while a diminution of numbers on our side, would necessarily leave our troops in a state of debility, and consequently

requently of inactivity, that would render the enemy master of his own time and operations, till our reinforcements arrived; during which interval, a variety of accidents might happen essentially detrimental to our interest, and impossible to prevent from the inadequateness of our strength to act with sufficient energy in the various and continual scenes of such a complication of hostilities.

Nor should it be forgotten, that through this incessant practice of arms, the Americans would gradually inure themselves to the dangers and feats of war, and become no less proficient than our own troops. To suppose a radical deficiency in that people, of those qualities that form a soldier, was not worthy of a serious answer: their behaviour upon sundry occasions in the late war, and since the commencement of the present hostilities, was an ample refutation of all surmises of this kind.

It was therefore highly probable, that in a moderate lapse of time, they would profit so well by the lessons we should have taught them, as to arrive at an equality in the regularity of discipline and science of tactics with our own people. As the certainty of this could not reasonably be called in question, it was an object deserving of the most serious consideration. As soon as they found themselves upon a parity with our troops in so material a point; they would of course become more fearless and enterprising, and would seek every opportunity of encountering them that was not too hazardous and decisive. Prudence would forbid them to expose themselves to general engagements, but no occasion would be neglected to assail us in every quarter. The numbers that would be destroyed in this manner, would necessarily be considerable, and so effectually diminish our strength, as to put it out of our power to avail ourselves of those favourable occurrences,

Currencies, the improvement of which might require a larger force than that remaining in our possession.

In the mean time, the expences concomitant on a war of this kind would be enormous. Small would be the supplies of necessaries from a country where every-individual would make a merit of withholding or concealing them from our people. Force alone would procure us the means of subsistence where they could be found; but on this we might rely, that whatever could not be removed out of our reach, would be destroyed, sooner than suffered to fall into our hands. In such a situation it was clear that the charges of such an army as was proposed, would prove a burthen, the weight of which would more than any other contribute to render the countenance of war insupportable.

Let it however be supposed that these prodigious efforts met with the desired success, and that after a deluge of blood spilt on both sides, the slaughter should cease, through the complete overthrow of the American armies, what a spectacle would next appear to reward us for the havock we should have made on that unhappy continent? Those who had been witnesses of the ravages committed during the last war in Germany, and of the recent desolation in Poland, were best able to answer that question.

Not however to exaggerate matters, what could a commercial state propose by retaining the possession of a country, after destroying, at a ruinous expense whatever made it worthy of preservation? Populousness, wealth, and industry, were the only objects Great Britain had in view, in settling and cultivating America. The establishment of them upon the prosperous footing they were in at present, had cost the nation immense sums, and had required the labours and solicitude of near two centuries from their first foundation. Experience had taught mankind, that though the accomplishment of their destruction

destruction might be a work of expedition and facility, yet it was a matter of great difficulty to effect their restoration. If in the impetuosity of rage and vengeance this should be the fate of America, what would be the emoluments of bringing it to subjection? The obstinacy of the people there was known to be such, that sooner than submit, they had resolved, if unable to maintain their ground, to set fire to their towns and habitations, and retire into the interior parts of the land, where they would fix themselves in places inaccessible to our arms. Here they would continue unf subdued, and fatigue us by perpetual alarms and incursions. Meanwhile the depredations and miseries of war would have ruined the Provinces along the coast; slaughter and famine would have consumed great numbers of the inhabitants; the remainder would be so broken and despatched, that they would not think in such a condition of renewing their former pursuits; they would lose their vigour and activity, and confine themselves to the procuring of a mere livelihood. Such was the usual destiny of countries over-run and desolated by the devastations of war.

With such a prospect before them, how were the people of England to be repaid the expences incurred in the reduction of America? The enormity of them exceeded all the usual calculations in such matters: European expeditions were no standards whereby to measure them. The opulence of Great Britain, however immense, would not be found adequate to the aggregate of those prodigious sums that would of necessity be called for in the course of so tedious and remote an undertaking, and amidst so vast a theatre of operations. Perseverance in so many difficulties, would only increase them. An additional load of debt would be the unavoidable consequence; but the realm was already so oppressed with taxes and duties of all denominations, that such

such as were the most expert in contriving ways and means, were at a loss where to discover any further resources, even for the payment of the interest.

But on a supposition that funds could be found to answer all exigencies, what end would be attained in the subjugation of America but that of revenge? This might satisfy haughtiness and rancour, but was it consistent with policy to suffer such motives to doom to perdition so extensive and beneficial a commerce as that of our Colonies? It was in vain to flatter ourselves that this would not be the case. The disposition of the inhabitants would be restless in their endeavours to resist and to expell us; this would be their sole aim; they would chearfully consent to a penurious life, and to hard fare in the strong holds and fastnesses to which they would retire, rather than permit a quiet enjoyment of their country to an enemy. Those who yielded to our power, and among whom we established our quarters, would become indefatigable spies upon all our motions and designs, and give their countrymen such perpetual intelligence, as would frustrate all attempts against them; while they, on the other hand, would not leave us a moment of quiet, and would defeat all our endeavours to restore obedience and tranquility.

In such a light the conquest of America would be a mere delusion. It would, in fact, become a scene of incessant warfare, and drain us of our men and our money in the same manner as had happened to Spain in that long course of fruitless and ruinous hostilities in the Low Countries, which entirely broke at last the strength of that monarchy.

Deprived of one third of her trade, which was the proportion allowed to that of the Colonies, did Great Britain perceive from whence she was to replace it? Fortunate accidents might eventually prevent her from sinking under so dreadful a pressure; but was it prudent to trust to bare casualties? The chances,

chances were evidently against her; all Europe was taken up in the improvement of commerce; every country cherished the branches peculiar to it with an invidious partiality; and they all seemed to bear a marked enmity or envy to Britain.

All these were cogent motives to induce reasonable and provident men, to relax in their resentment to the Colonies, and not to indulge a revenge which would ultimately fall upon Great Britain. In private animosities, men were often apt, by prosecuting them, to wound themselves through the fide of an enemy. This would inevitably be the case of Britain, if she persisted in the determination to carry into execution the dreadful threats she had denounced against America.

Such were the manifest and unexaggerated consequences of the reduction of America, considered merely in a commercial view. But there was another of so alarming a nature, as ought alone to preponderate against all other considerations. This was the enormous increase of the military list, and of all its concomitances. Great complaints had often been made that unnecessary numbers of troops were kept in pay; and that a militia alone ought to be entrusted with the guard and defence of a free country. But what would the murmurs of the nation be, when they beheld the vast armies that must be raised and maintained for the purposes now in contemplation.

The people of England were naturally jealous and fearful of any accession of power to the Crown; but it would in the present case become inevitably more considerable than ever. What would render it more particularly an object of suspicion and terror, would be the number of foreign troops taken into the British service. These being, like other military levies, entirely at the disposal of the Crown, must give it such a weight and influence, as could not

not fail to excite continual apprehensions, and occasion general umbrage.

After considering the consequences of a war with America, should the arms of Britain prove so successful as to overcome the Americans in the field, and compel them to fly for refuge to the difficult recesses and inaccessible tracts in their back settlements, impartiality now required that the other side of the question should be attended to ; and that we should also duly examine, what our situation would be, in case we should be unable to stand our ground upon that continent.

Many there were who would not even admit the possibility, much less the probability of such an event : persons of this sort were not to be argued with ; but as reason and experience had shown that events of this description had often come to pass, it behoved every unprejudiced man to reflect on what must follow, should the attempts of Britain be defeated.

Should we therefore meet with a resistance too strong and well conducted to be overcome ; should the Americans employ the many advantages resulting from the distance of their situation, and the natural impediments of their country so skillfully and so fortunately as to foil us in our endeavours to subdue them ; should our troops on shore be wasted in fruitless attacks and expeditions, and our fleets prove unable to cut off those supplies which either their own or foreign shipping would be employed to procure ; if after a long, severe, and expensive contest, Britain should be necessitated to give it up, what would be her condition and circumstances in case of such a failure ?

No nation upon earth is more susceptible than the English, of the mortification arising from public disgraces. It would be overwhelmed with grief and shame at the diminution of its glory, purchased at such

such an expence of blood and treasure, and now tarnished in so unlooked for a manner. Both our political and martial character would suffer on this occasion : we should be taxed with want of prudence and foresight : we should be accused of defect in military abilities : we should undergo all those imputations which are the usual concomitants of adverse fortune. The eyes of Europe would be fixed upon us, in order to discover by what methods our distresses could be converted to the advantage of so many rivals : the dread we were held in no longer operating, we should be exposed to ill usage and insult, and obliged at last, perhaps, to turn our arms against these foreign aggressors, after having used them unsuccessfully against our own people.

This was not the language of party and malevolence ; it was founded on the probability of the same events besailing us, that had befallen other states before. If the subject was duly considered, we had every reason to apprehend this would be our destiny. Every thing seemed to conspire against our present measures, and to warn us to desist from their prosecution. The strength and preparations of America alone were an object highly deserving of our reflections : it had been shown that we should meet with infinite difficulties in contending with them. But who could remain so ignorant of European politics, as to entertain a moment's doubt, that America would be secretly, if not openly supported in her resistance ? It was unnecessary to enumerate those who would be ready to befriend her : the list was composed of every power that stood in awe of Britain ; it was therefore numerous, and it behoved us to calculate well our own strength, before we ventured to encounter with that of so many enemies.

Europe had long made it the capital maxim of her politics, to combine against every state that was become

become formidable to the rest. To this combination the United Provinces of the Netherlands owed, in a great measure, their emancipation from the Spanish yoke. After humbling Spain, the ambition of the House of Austria was curbed by a like association. Another was afterwards formed against France with the same intent and success; and now it was the turn of Great Britain to be opposed in the like manner.

These were precedents that required our utmost attention, whenever we took into consideration the affairs of our Colonies. We should not delude ourselves with a fond expectation, that the quarrel between Great Britain and America would be confined to these two combatants; as many would enter into it, as thought themselves interested in thwarting us.

It was highly probable, therefore, that by attacking America, we should involve ourselves with all Europe. This would be a situation which the most sanguine favourers of hostilities against the Colonies must allow to be very alarming. Yet they could not deny the justness of such a surmise. Private and clandestine succours of ammunition and warlike stores had already found their way from foreign parts into the harbours of America: this was a prelude, which would, with the more likelihood, lead to further assistance, as the partiality of the world to the Colonists was notorious, and the wishes of the major part of Europe were decidedly in their favour.

Notwithstanding the opulence, the power, the spirit of Great Britain, could she flatter herself with any well-founded hope, of being able to resist the impression that would be made upon her from every quarter of the world? It would be happy, were she so obstinate as to adhere to her present system, if,

after losing her Colonies, she escaped herself from the dangers that would encompass her at home.

To what infatuation, therefore, was it owing, that menaced with such evident and indubitable perils, she would be so unadvised as to affront them without absolute necessity? When a nation's dearest interests, or its honour are at stake, it cannot display too much resolution and intrepidity in the defence and preservation of such valuable objects: but when its motive for drawing the sword is to assert uncertain and questionable rights, it cannot sheath it too soon, when it perceives that the generality of mankind not only contradict its opinion, but have formed a confederacy in order the more effectually to resist its views.

This was a fair and impartial state of the question, without favour or prejudice to any party. The question itself was of such magnitude and importance, that it was a great misfortune it should be considered as liable to cause any other than a friendly and earnest discussion among all true friends to this country, without exciting heats and animosities, which had never been more unseasonable than at the present juncture.

These arguments and representations of the minority, were copiously answered by the supporters of government; who contended that they were evidently calculated to impress the public with an undue apprehension of the situation of national affairs, and to deter it from acting with spirit and decision.

The Americans, it was warmly asserted, aimed openly and explicitly at independence: to affirm the contrary, was equally weak and false. Had they not taken possession of all the powers of government, levied forces, and raised money for their pay and sustenance, issued bills of credit, and exercised every other act of sovereignty? Their pretences of loyalty

Loyalty were contradicted by all their actions. While transmitting addresses and petitions to the Throne, they were preparing for an obstinate continuance of war; and boasted among themselves of the strength they had collected, and of the resolutions and arrangements they had taken for that purpose. Their discourses, their publications, their correspondence, were full of the plans they were forming for the establishment of the new constitution they had in view. They already spoke of America as a separate state, and as no longer intending to acknowledge any subordination to Great Britain. Who could, after such unquestionable proofs of their designs, call them a dutiful and loyal people?

Were one even to allow the veracity of their professions, what was their amount? An acknowledgment of the sovereignty over them of the Monarch who wears the Crown of Britain. But does this acknowledgment include obedience to the legislative power, formed by that sovereign and his Parliament? By no means: it goes no further than a superficial undefined hommage, binding them to no obligation of compliance with the royal injunctions, and leaving them in the full possession of all their claims.

Could confidence and reconciliation take place upon such terms? All had been tried in order to effect them which the wisdom of Parliament could suggest; but the obstinacy of the Colonists was inflexible. They seemed regardless of the extremities to which all things were hastening by the violence of their proceedings. They treated this country with equal contempt and suspicion. They construed its moderation into fear, and its forbearance into temporising.

Though Parliament had not formally given up the right of taxation; it had placed that matter on such a footing, that the Colonies were authorised to tax themselves.

themselves. But far from being satisfied with that permission, they refused to exercise it as requested : no specific sum had been demanded ; they were left at their own option to decide its amount ; but such was their unconciliating temper, that while they had full cause to be persuaded that a moderate contribution would suffice, they would not even condescend to offer any.

Such behaviour made it evident, that as they no longer intended to pay any regard to the authority of Britain, no accommodation with them could be expected. Our duty was now to carry our terms in the one hand, and our sword in the other : to behave otherwise would subject us to neglect, and render us contemptible.

Much had been insisted on the propriety of reverting to that situation in which the connection between Great Britain and America stood at the conclusion of the last war ; but this was a difficult and complicated object ; it involved the repeal of every act made since that period, and was, in fact, a cession of the most necessary jurisdiction over the Colonies.

It was no longer time to inquire into the causes of the respective situation of Great Britain and her Colonies at this day. The business now in hand was to compose all differences between them, as effectually and as speedily as possible. Both parties, as in most altercations, had been guilty of errors ; but it was most advisable to bury them in oblivion, and attend only to the cure of present disorders. It were to be wished, however, that those who recommended this inquiry, would remember, in the intemperance of their zeal for America, that Great Britain was the country of which they were, by their personal situation, principally bound to consult the welfare.

The measures proposed by ministry were clearly dictated by necessity. Defiance was bidden to this country ;

country; armies were raised, war proclaimed, and its lawful rights trampled upon. The Americans had now gone so far, that it was incumbent on us to meet them as their superiors, and compel them to acknowledge their inferiority. It were shameful to display less spirit than they manifested upon this occasion. They had taken up arms to maintain an unjust revolt from their parent state; but we were contending for justice, honour, and dominion.—We must either valiantly support these pretensions, or disgracefully abandon the sovereignty of America, and demean ourselves in the eyes of all Europe.

The fate of Great Britain, as it had been often before, was now again in suspense. After having for a long course of years, flourished beyond any monarchy in Christendom, it remained to be decided, whether this prosperity should have any further duration. Should those rich and powerful Colonies, the works of her hands, the fruits of her industry, planted with so much care, nursed with such constant attention, and guarded with so great anxiety, should they, through the misguided hands of their own people, be undutifully severed from the parent state, and through the machinations of false friends to them, and secret foes to us, ungratefully become our declared enemies, such a scene would be exhibited as had no precedent either in ancient or modern history.

It was to prevent such a calamity that Britain had recourse to arms. She was conscious that a severe trial was at hand, but the sooner she entered the field, the less of difficulty she should have to encounter, as the enemy would be the less prepared. Much depended upon giving him no leisure to form those many arrangements he had projected; they were hostile in the highest degree, and should therefore be obviated with the utmost expedition. After giving repeated proofs of patience, forbearance,

and an ardent desire of reconciliation; on the entire failure of every hope and expectation of this kind, the only measure now left to this country was to summon all her spirit and vigour, and to exert them effectually.

True it was, that to reduce America to obedience was an arduous task; but that was no argument against the attempt. It had lately been usual to represent the Americans as invincible upon their own ground, and that to endeavour at a subjugation of that country, would be labour lost: but such representations were calculated to dispirit and deter the British nation from acting with that courage and energy which were now requisite. Allowing the Americans to be brave and resolute, Englishmen were their equals at least in all military qualifications, and were not to be terrified by the description of the dangers and obstacles they were to meet with; they had surmounted as great; they had fought and overcome as valiant soldiers as the Americans.

Such insinuations were unworthy of the heads of a great and mighty people. Instead of thus striving to depress, their first care should be to exalt and invigorate the minds of the community. The more imminent the peril, the more strenuously they should study to inculcate fearlessness and intrepidity. By acting a contrary part, they laid themselves open to suspicions of their own fidelity and good wishes to the state,

There was no reason to despair of success in the undertaking the nation was so justly embarked in. The power of Great Britain had been experimentally found adequate to the most surprising achievements. She had in the last war overthrown the collected might of the whole House of Bourbon; she had supported the King of Prussia against all the northern powers of Europe; she had reigned absolute mis-
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treis at sea ; she had conquered for her rebellious children that region which they now threatened to tear from her dominion.

The strength and resources of Britain had long been the astonishment of all nations. In proportion as her difficulties increased, her genius and abilities had kept equal pace with them. No power that ever contended with Great Britain had been benefitted by the contest. She was envied, but she was no less feared. Those who desired her humiliation were no doubt numerous ; but this was not to be accomplished without exposing themselves to her resentment ; and in whatever situation she might be, her courage was known to be invincible ; and it was usually in the very worst extremities that her efforts were most daring and successful.

European politics were now so busily taken up with the concerns of America, that every motion of this country was watched, in expectation of profiting through its errors. Such was the language of those who wavered in their resolutions, or who sought to invalidate the justness of the measures now adopted against the Colonies. It were indeed unwise in any ministry to overlook what was doing on the continent of Europe ; but there would be less wisdom still to make our arrangements depend on the consultations of foreign courts. This would be subjecting us to their management in such a degree, as would quickly destroy the respect and influence we were wont to command. While we acted with prudence, we needed not to look abroad for approbation and consent ; success and prosperity would always insure them ; the regard paid by states to each other, was directed wholly by this motive.

It would be weak and spiritless to refrain from doing ourselves justice, merely from the apprehension of interference in favour of the Americans. This was at most a chance in the scale against us, the weight

weight of which we might never feel, though it was now so heavily anticipated. The way to prevent it, was to put ourselves in such a posture of defence, as to take away all inclination to molest us from those whom we suspected of such intentions. When they saw that no motives whatever were able to daunt us, and that we were prepared for the worst, the remembrance of what this nation had done, and the conviction of what it was able to do, when roused by necessity, and impelled by its native spirit, would probably cool the warmth of its most inveterate enemies.

The reputation and the interest of the British nation had never been so thoroughly united before in so dangerous a contest. Its importance ought to silence all lesser contentions. Whether ministry or opposition argued with most acuteness on the subject, ought no longer to employ a moment's thought. The Colonies were in arms against Great Britain; the constitutional authority of the realm had pronounced them guilty of rebellion, and had appointed an armed force to reduce them to obedience.—Whoever, therefore, was a true friend to the kingdom, would cease to oppose the decisions of a lawful majority, and not discourage the prosecution of those measures, of which the success depended so essentially on the steadiness and uninterruptedness with which they were pursued.

Such was the general purport of the replies made by the friends of the ministry to the reasonings of their opponents. The space of a whole night was consumed in the debates upon the Royal speech: it was near five in the morning when the motion proceeding from the opposition was rejected, by two hundred and seventy-eight, against one hundred and eight,

This was, in the apprehension of all men, a complete and decisive victory over the endeavours of
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the American party to prevail upon Parliament to make further concessions to the Colonies. The conciliatory motion was looked upon as fair ground for a treaty. It was thought to comprehend the substance of all they could wish; to reject it, therefore, was considered as a plain, unequivocal proof, that they were not sincere in their protestations of amity to this country; and that whatever terms might be laid before them, they would still find reasons to alledge against their acceptance.

In such a persuasion, it was not difficult to dispose a majority of the members in Parliament, as well as of the nation at large, to concur in a final determination to commit the cause of the kingdom to the decision of arms. So much had been spoken and written concerning the subject in question, it had been agitated so many years without coming to a conclusion; it had, on the contrary, become so perplexed, and was now entangled in so many arguments, that people had lost all patience, and were thoroughly convinced that the only way to end it, was by a trial of strength.

The truth was, that like all other momentous questions between two great national bodies, the controversy was carried on with so much vehemence and acrimony on both sides, that the seeds of mischief were sown betimes, and began to make their appearance soon after the very commencement of the dispute. It was attended with another circumstance that contributed to embitter it in the severest degree. One of the parties concerned assumed a style of superiority, to which, from its relative situation respecting the other, it thought no more than its due. But the other, though exteriorly compliant with long received forms, had attained and felt a strength and importance, that made this compliance uneasy. This sensation, though it operated imperceptibly, was a perpetual incentive to the passions

sions of a high-spirited people. It stimulated them to assert and maintain their consequence upon every occasion that offered. The less they presumed to do it in words and expressions, the more effectually they always did it by their deeds and transactions.

A contest of such a nature, could not fail, in its progress, to be productive of many subjects of reciprocal irritation. Sometimes the habitual notions of superior dignity would induce the one party to insist upon the points in debate with a warmth bordering upon haughtiness; sometimes the firmness of sentiments inspired by consciousness of freedom, would impel the other to express himself with a boldness little differing from defiance. From incidents of this kind, offence and resentment reciprocally arose. The one was taxed with arrogance, the other with audacity.

From this mutual strife, proceeded partial investigations of each others respective merits, the result of which was favourable to neither. The one was accused of pride, ambition, and avarice; the other of ingratitude, petulance, and selfishness. In the mean time both pleaded the multiplicity of ties that had linked them together for such a multitude of years: but the one complained they were made a pretence to exercise the authority of a master; the other, that the remembrance of the benefits to which they had given occasion, was totally obliterated.

Great Britain could not forget in what manner the first settlers had gone forth under the shelter of her wings, and with what vigour she had protected them in the plenitude of her power. Her Colonies as readily reminded her, with what expedition their industry repaid her assistance, and how effectually they had co-operated towards her prosperity and splendour. In the various enumeration of services rendered to each other, they could not always refrain from over-balancing the account: hence followed

sowed reproaches, taunts, and malevolent insinuations; and at length, jealousy, suspicion, and enmity.

When they had arrived thus far, it was easy to perceive that the altercation of which these bickerings had proved the collateral attendants, would derive its final issue from their influence. Prejudice, partiality, and resentment, had by this time taken possession of the minds of men on both sides the Atlantic. Together with the natural desire of gaining the point in litigation, they were prompted by a secret antipathy to each other, that rendered them averse to condescendence. Thus both meeting on the long beaten ground of this fatal contest, with a resolution not to yield, the decision became a forlorn hope, and was left to the contingency of those events, to which, when they cannot agree about any other method of settling their differences, mankind have been used to make their last appeal.

Such were the steps by which two people, sprung from the same origin, and long united by the bonds of interest and consanguinity, became at length totally divided in sentiments, affections, and government; and from harmonizing in all public matters with the most perfect concord and friendliness, proceeded at last to the opposite extremes of dissention and enmity,

Both people were now beginning to lose those feelings for each other, which language, religion, relationship, and a variety of such motives, had once contributed to render so strong. But this unhappy difference had gradually weakened them to such a degree, that they hardly subsisted any where, save in the remembrance of the parties. Instead of that cheerfulness and cordiality with which they met and conversed with each other, such as had lived together in habits of intimacy, were become cautious in the disclosure of their thoughts. Suspicious

ousness had now taken the place of confidence, and they guarded against each other as spies and enemies.

In so irksome a situation of mind, they naturally stood aloof, and were inclined to no communication excepting with those whom they knew to be staunch friends to their respective cause. Hence England and America, from being the favourite objects of their reciprocal speculations, assumed the appearance of countries indifferent to them. They were spoken of, together with what related to them, as an Englishman converses about France, and a Frenchman about England.

Thus they were completely weaned from those considerations that had formerly proved the occasion and the cement of so much friendship and goodwill between private individuals, and of course, had influenced so powerfully the public connection between the two countries.

These were melancholy reflections to persons of humanity, who had been witnesses of the concord and benevolence that had subsisted in Britain and in the Colonies, between all subjects indiscriminately. They could not recal without emotion, those happy times, when the natives of America, such even as had not been out of their country, never spoke of England but as their home.

In the midst of these resentments and heart-burnings, the Colonies were particularly exasperated at the introduction of foreign troops into this quarrel. They looked upon this measure as an unanswerable proof, that all regard for their character, as Englishmen, was fled; and that Great Britain viewed them as strangers, whom, if she could not conquer and enslave, she was determined to destroy. This persuasion excited their most violent indignation; they considered themselves as abandoned to plunder and massacre, and that Britain was unfeelingly bent

on their ruin, by whatsoever means she could compass it.

While the Colonists represented this measure in so sanguinary a light, it was depicted at home in the same colour by their partisans. It was even reprobated by many individuals, who were not averse to the other parts of the ministerial plan, but who could not bring themselves to approve of the interference of foreign mercenaries in our domestic feuds. It was condemned as a precedent full of danger to the constitution, and as an instrument, which in the hands of an artful and daring minister, might, on a future occasion, be converted to the most iniquitous purposes. After employing it at a distance, it might upon various pretences be brought nearer home; and we should then feel the consequences of having given encouragement and countenance to a project of so pernicious a tendency.

It was not only throughout the public at large this measure occasioned so much discontent: after having in Parliament undergone the keenest censure of the opposition, it fell under the displeasure of a considerable number of those who sided with the minister, and were generally used to support the measures of government; but on this occasion they loudly dissented from them. Several quitted the House without voting; others who voted in his favour, obliged him previously to give them an assurance that he would remove all their doubts and scruples, and satisfy them clearly upon this subject.

The constitution, it was argued, militated in the most direct and particular manner against all proceedings of this kind. Such an attempt to bring a military force into the British dominions was repugnant to law, and subversive of the rights established at the Revolution. No such prerogative was acknowledged in the Crown. No troops could

could be raised without consent of Parliament, much less was it authorised to call in a foreign army. Strangers were no proper persons to commit the guard of the realm to, without the utmost necessity ; nor even then without the maturest deliberation of Parliament, and without its formal and explicit approbation.

They who approved of the measure, pleaded the necessity of the times. Troops were immediately wanted, and the greatest expedition was required. Delays were the ruin of all military enterprises. The strongest promises had been made by Parliament of a zealous concurrence with the Crown, in taking every proper step to reduce the Colonies to obedience : it ought not therefore to be obstructed in its very first endeavours.

Some there were, who supported this measure on the ground of precedent. This country had seen a considerable body of strangers come to its assistance in the rebellion of forty-five ; and in the commencement of the late war. The revolution itself was partly due to foreign aid. In the present instance, the force alluded to was intended for the suppression of a revolt in a distant part of the British dominions : no candid person would alledge, that any danger could arise to the liberty of this Island, from employing that force three thousand miles on the other side of the Atlantic ocean.

But whatever arguments were used in vindication of this measure, its general danger appeared so real, and the reasonings of its opponents so justly founded, that it was judged necessary to abandon the defence of its legality. In order to quiet the minds of such as were alarmed upon this account, assurances were given, that it should undergo a Parliamentary revision, and be disposed of according to the judgment of the House.

In the mean time, the prospect of a continuation of hostilities in America began to offend a multitude of

of persons in this country. They had felt much displeasure at those that had taken place already ; but they had flattered themselves, that on a serious consideration of the detrimental consequences that would result from them to both countries, the cool and moderate of both parties would step in, and exert themselves effectually to bring about an accommodation, before the fury of the contestants had risen too high to be controled.

Among those whose personal character gave the greatest weight to their disapprobation of hostilities, was General Conway. His political principles had been steadily marked with temperateness and caution. He had long strove to divert the storm he had seen gathering ; but the times were so tempestuously inclined, that he had failed like many others. He now explicitly united with opposition in reprobating the American war : he declared the conquest of that country equally inexpedient and impracticable. Notwithstanding the act asserting the legislative authority of Great Britain had passed during his administration, he expressed the most fervent wish it should be repealed sooner than stand in the way of reconciliation.

He was joined by others in challenging the ministry to lay before the House some satisfactory account of the present state of affairs in America, as it was incumbent on Parliament to act with its eyes open, in the busines that was now coming before it. Much was demanded from the nation ; a prospect was opening which filled it with anxiety ; it was not judicious to proceed further, without knowing upon what ground it stood.

The intelligence arriving daily from America, was very unfavourable. The situation of the troops at Boston was so critical, that their very safety was sometimes a matter of doubt. Though official accounts had not transpired, it was well known that

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the affairs of Britain in that quarter were in great disorder ; and that notwithstanding the goodness of the troops, and the valour of their commander, they were hard pressed by the enemy, and in a very distressed condition.

It was urged, upon this occasion, as it had been often before, by the friends to vigour and decisiveness, that the capital fault lay in setting out upon the great and arduous business proposed, with a force inadequate to its execution and importance. While a strength worthy of so vast an undertaking was not called forth, it would never be accomplished, and would only lead this country into further difficulties, errors, and misfortunes, till that power was wasted piecemeal in fruitless efforts, which, had it been at once collected, would have made an effectual impression.

Those who defended the conduct of ministry, represented the impediments concomitant on the situation of those at the helm in such a country as Britain. Abilities and experience, however acknowledged, would not apologize with the public for going beyond the line of cautiousness and circumspection, before its sanction had been obtained for bolder measures : but this depended upon so many contingencies, that before it was compassed, time often stole away the opportunities of deserving it. Ministers were not ignorant, that for great undertakings, great efforts were necessary ; but had such a force been demanded on the determination of proceeding to coercive measures, as was suggested by men of bold and extensive ideas, it was much to be feared the demand would have been answered with refusal.

Instructed by events, it was not however to be doubted that ministry would regulate the steps that were to be taken, according to the nature of exigencies. The progress made by the Americans during

during the last twelvemonth, in increasing their strength, and preparing for defence, had exceeded all reasonable expectation. It had not been imagined that such numbers would have betaken themselves to arms. But as that was the case, Great Britain must of necessity proportion her strength to theirs. The late operations in New England had been formed according to the informations that were judged the most to be relied on. It had been boasted among the opposition, that they were much better informed ; if so, it was their duty to have laid aside their private piques, and to have assisted the public with their advice. Ministry did not pretend to infallibility ; but they had consulted likelihood ; and if their plans had hitherto not succeeded to their wishes, it had not been for want of due care and preparation.

Much distress and misery had been foretold to Britain from the prosecution of a war with our Colonies. The prediction was admitted ; but on the other hand, much more would fall upon the Colonies themselves. It were to be desired, that for their own sake, they were convinced of this truth, as it would preserve them from a number of calamities, and Great Britain from the mortification of inflicting them. Their situation was such, that from the naval superiority of this country, their trade would, in all probability, be utterly ruined, and their coasts would be exposed to our attacks on every side.

These were indeed no matters of triumph to an Englishman ; but as opposition took a manifest delight in magnifying the difficulties that would accompany the project of reducing America by force of arms, as the spirit and strength of the Colonists were described in the most alarming manner, and little hopes were allowed to be entertained of succeeding against them, it was a duty which ministry

owed to the nation, to dissipate the apprehensions which these exaggerated representations might have occasioned, and to lay before the public a just and true state of affairs, without increasing or diminishing the powers of the enemy, that the nation might be convinced, that by leading forth its armies against the Colonies, a resolute, but not an impracticable business, had been undertaken.

The present appearances might not, indeed, be promising from the vast inequality of the respective force now in action; but that deficiency would soon be remedied, and a sufficient number of troops be brought into the field, to recover and secure a footing of superiority. The Colonies would not presume to face, on equal ground, such an army as was designed to act against them; and allowing them all those military virtues with which the zeal of their partisans was so ready to endow them, still the advantages of knowledge and experience in the officers, of practice and veteranship in the soldiers, and of eminent abilities in the commanders, would be such, as to compel every unprejudiced observer to acknowledge, that the probability of success lay incomparably on the side of Great Britain.

Uncommon stress had been laid on the patriotism of the Colonists, and that they would submit to distress much more cheerfully than our people: this alone, it was said, would be an inexhaustible fund, where the contest on the one side was for glory and dominion, but on the other for property and freedom, motives much more powerful and cogent than the former. All this was specious, and sounding in the ears of such as listened only to one side of the question: but whoever attended to the common course of human transactions, would perceive that without an adequate supply of what mankind have so justly, as well as emphatically, stiled the fine-wires of war, the most obstinate courage must yield at last

to those who possess them. The situation of America in this respect was extremely critical : the quantity of specie throughout the Colonies, was no object ; their pecuniary correspondence depended wholly upon commercial articles given and taken in exchange : the Congress had been obliged to emit a large sum in paper money, for the subsistence of their troops, and other necessary expences : the warmth and ferment now high among them, had facilitated its acceptance and circulation at the present, and might keep it awhile in motion ; but when people saw that it commanded no specie, they would soon hold it cheap, and decline so precarious a security : this would not fail to throw matters into confusion : whatever attachment people might profess for government, a depreciation of the public currency was so directly connected with every individuals immediate concerns, that nothing would sooner discredit a state, and lessen the zeal of those who supported it.

Such, according to all the rules of probability, would very shortly be the situation of America. It would then remain to be seen, whether the perseverance of the Colonists, would be proof against the hardships that would inevitably follow from the want of money, and of trade to procure it. No man could take upon him to ascertain events ; but unless an extraordinary concourse of fortuitous accidents came to the assistance of the Americans, no likelihood appeared that they would be able to extricate themselves out of these difficulties, any more than that they could possibly avoid them.

It was upon speculations of this kind, founded in the nature of things, and constantly verified by experience, that ministry built the expectation of succeeding in the measures it had taken to reduce the Colonies. It entertained too great a respect for the mighty nation, by whom it was entrusted with

the management of its affairs, to expose it upon mere presumption to so vast and arduous an enterprise. But as its honour and interest were equally concerned on the one hand, and there was a well-grounded prospect of success on the other, ministry was bound in duty to omit no opportunity of asserting them to the utmost of its abilities.

The power of the British nation was great and unquestionable; but the resources of America were uncertain: nothing but a blind infatuation, existed and cherished by a factious combination, could have plunged the Colonists into a war, the waging of which must be ruinous, and the issue very doubtful at best. The violence and impetuosity which ruled them at present, took away both their capacity and inclination to reflect with coolness on their proceedings. But it was not to be supposed, that when brought into straits, they would not make due comparisons between the price they were paying for the rights they claimed, and the mild dependence they lived in, while acknowledging the sovereignty of Great Britain. Reflections of this kind would come with additional weight in the day of calamity and distress; and that this day would speedily arrive, was not to be controverted. From the combined influence of these considerations on the one hand, and the vigorous pressure of the British arms on the other, the most lively hope might be formed, that a prosperous termination would be put to the contest. This hope was nourished with the more fervour, as it was resolved that the clemency of Great Britain should be held out to the Colonies in so inviting and powerful a manner, that nothing but the most obdurate and unaccountable obstinacy should be able to withstand it.

With reasonings to this effect did ministry reply to the arguments of opposition in both Houses;

but

But in that of the Peers they met with other causes to exercise their abilities and to alarm them.

A nobleman of very high rank, (the Duke of Grafton) who had once held the first place in administration, and had sided with it till now, declared his determination to proceed no further in the measures that were prosecuting against America. He complained that he had been led thus far by deception and erroneous information; that some facts had been withheld from his knowledge, and others misrepresented; owing to this he had countenanced measures, which, otherwise, he should never have approved. To compel America to submit by force of arms, was entirely foreign to his intention: he supported this idea, from a conviction that no more was meant than to hold it out as a commination to the refractory Colonists: it was by no means to be realized, as it was asserted by those who advised it, that an intimidation of this sort would suffice to shake the resolution of the Colonies, and bring them to the terms desired. Had he been as well acquainted with the real situation of America, as he was at present, he never would have coincided with a threat of such a nature, and would have laboured for a reconciliation by means more acceptable to their disposition.

The result of his maturer thoughts and better knowledge led him to conclude, that an entire repeal was necessary of all the acts relating to America, passed since the conclusion of the last war, and that had been productive of discontent. They were such as could be completely dispensed with, and did not affect the sovereignty of Great Britain; but they weighed heavy upon the Colonies, and had contributed to perpetuate differences between them and this country, without procuring it any utility. The restoration of peace and union was of such consequence, that no other motives should be suffered to stand in the way. Of whatever importance they

might appear, they were but of a secondary consideration, when compared with the indispensable necessity of an immediate reconciliation with the Colonies.

It was urged also from other quarters, that the consequences of delaying to conclude this tedious contest, were becoming every day more serious. It would soon be past all remedy, if we waited for a renewal of hostilities. Another campaign, whether prosperous or adverse, would fix both parties in such habits of hostility, as would render them indifferent to an accomodation, and induce them to carry the trial of their respective abilities in the field much farther than they entertained any conception of at present. Thus they would go on shedding each others blood, to the great satisfaction of the enemies of Britain, who in this reciprocal slaughter of her subjects, would enjoy the long wished for period of that formidable power, which as it had arisen from their union, would now terminate with their discord.

These were consequences which every man foresaw, who did not flatter himself with vain conjectures, which stood on no other foundation than abstract and speculative reasonings. But however plausible these might seem to fancy, they would not stand the test of judgment. The case between Great Britain and America was singular, and had no precedent. The most curious investigator in ancient or modern history, would find no transaction exactly corresponding with it. That which bore the nearest similitude, was the defection of the Low Countries from Spain; but here, though in some respects the causes of dissention were not unlike, yet there was a prodigious difference between the relative strength of the Spanish monarchy at that æra, and that of Britain at this present day. Spain was mistress of the fairest parts of Europe, and of all

all America; in the East Indies she was without a competitor; she was the only naval power in being; that of England was in its infancy; she had the most numerous standing army, and her officers and soldiers were incomparably the best disciplined of any. With all these advantages, she was not able to reduce the Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries.

The situation of Great Britain with regard to her Colonies, was very far from being so advantageous: they formed an extensive country, full of interior impediments to an enemy: they were inhabited by hardy and resolute men, inured to the use of arms, and passionately fond of freedom. But that which principally secured them was their immense distance. They lay three thousand miles off; ambition could not approach them without an enormous expence. This alone was a barrier, that would, in the course of events, prove insurmountable; it would weaken and weary out their enemies, by exhausting them of their treasures, and oblige them to give over for want of means to continue.

If Spain failed in her attempt on the Dutch in the very zenith of her power, could Britain expect to reduce the Americans, with much fewer incitements to hope for success? She ought to take warning from the calamities that befel that ambitious monarchy, in consequence of her obstinately persisting, in spite of repeated failures, in her iniquitous endeavours to enslave a people who were struggling for their just rights. With such a lesson before her, she ought to retract in time, lest she should, in her turn, be held up as another proof of the woeful effects of haughtiness and obstinacy.

Were it even allowed that Britain's cause was a just one, was the mutual effusion of so much blood by the hands of friends and brethren, to be justified by the laws of humanity? The contest was, in fact,

about claims much more punctilioius than essentially were they to be renounced for ever, the interest of Britain would receive no detriment. Dignity was the term now appropriated to the pride which this country assumed towards her Colonies : but could that justify the imprudence of venturing the loss of solid and substantial prosperity and grandeur ? This was a method of proceeding reconcileable neither with conscience or honour. Had Britain been insulted by a foreign power, it behoved her, unless the offence was indeed very grievous, to avoid all methods of requiring satisfaction that tended to a breach of peace ; much less could she alledge any valid reason to draw the sword upon her own subjects, who had expressed the strongest desire to remain connected with her as before, and whose conduct was loudly applauded by the world, and condemned by none but herself.

To these arguments others were added, similar to those that had been adduced by the opposition in the other House ; such as the unimportance of a conquest that must be effected by the ruin of a country ; the improbability of effecting it ; and if such an end were attained, the unconquerable difficulties that would prevent Great Britain from retaining the Colonies any length of time. It was observed that by adopting the system of hostilities, an end was instantly put to the great multiplicity of benefits continually derived to this country from its connection with them ; as these benefits arose from peace and friendly intercourse, the suspension of these would of course interrupt them ; and if war and bloodshed were of any duration, would, by extinguishing former confidence and amity, destroy them perhaps for ever.

These were vigorous and impressive attacks upon the ministry. They did not deny the imperfectness of their information in some matters, but pleaded the impracti-

impracticability of obtaining such knowledge as might have prevented several disappointments. They were obliged to depend on the sagacity and judgment of those whom they trusted. Their correspondents were at an immense distance, and liable to be mistaken themselves in the opinions which they formed of men and their designs. They had taken all possible pains to proceed upon sure grounds, and had duly weighed every measure that had been enforced.— But it would be unjust to make them answerable for failures, that were occasioned by events totally unforeseen and unexpected by the shrewdest persons upon the spot: to such alone must be attributed the general want of success in the plans proposed and pursued in the course of the present year.

There were two remarkable instances of this kind; the one was the total alteration of circumstances in the Province of New York; the other was the implicit acquiescence of the Southern Colonies in the views and arrangements of the Northern. These were events that accelerated with irresistible rapidity the revolution of affairs throughout the whole continent, and equally surprized the ministry, who, from their intelligence, were well founded in apprehending no such unhappy turn.

But it was the part of men at the head of nations, to view these vicissitudes with coolness and resolution. It would argue debility of mind to be terrified by such occurrences from the prosecution of a plan that was necessary to be adopted at all events, and in the carrying on of which people must be weak indeed to imagine that all would be smooth and easy. The plan supposed a variety of impediments, and had accordingly made suitable preparations to encounter them. But in a trial of this sort, mankind, after hoping and providing for the best, ought not to be astonished were the whole project to be defeated. Such was often the fate of the best concerted

certed and the most judicious ; but this was no valid objection to the undertaking of them, when they were authorised by justice and propriety.

After a long and warm debate, the motion for an address similar to that of the House of Commons, was carried by seventy-six votes against thirty-three.

A protest was drawn up against it, and signed by nineteen Peers ; in which they condemned, with the utmost freedom and asperity, the war commenced against America. They censured, with equal severity, the employing of foreign troops, and various other parts of the ministerial conduct.

In the mean time, as none of the measures adopted by administration gave more umbrage than this employment of foreign troops, opposition determined to bring it before Parliament in the most solemn and serious manner.

A motion was accordingly made in the House of Lords, declaring that to take such a step, without the previous consent of Parliament, was dangerous and unconstitutional, as being clearly against law. By venturing on such a measure, ministry had given the constitution a wound, which unless cured with all speed, would become mortal. Though the intention might be innocent, the example would be fatal. It was by gradual steps that all mischief proceeded ; and this ought to be arrested in its first entrance into this kingdom, if we meant to give it an effectual expulsion. The subject was of no less importance than that of America itself. This extensive part of the British empire being probably lost for ever, men should, in times so pregnant with danger to liberty, be vigilant in preserving the remainder free. It was our freedom that we chiefly valued ourselves upon ; but foreigners, few of whom enjoyed it in their own country, knew not how to appraise its worth, and would therefore feel no remorse.

motse in depriving us of it, were we so imprudent as to put ourselves into their power. Were it allowable to introduce foreign forces into the kingdom, a door would be thrown open, through which they might soon enter in sufficient numbers to occasion universal alarm.

Administration denied, on the other hand, that this measure offended either the spirit or the letter of the Bill of Rights, the great palladium of English liberty since the Revolution. This bill forbade the introduction of a military force into the kingdom during peace; but the times certainly were not peaceable; and they were not to be brought into the realm. Did the meaning of that bill extend even to its dependencies, still, in the present case, the measure was highly justifiable, as the intention was evidently to quell a rebellion.

The competency of the Crown to levy and maintain troops during war, in any part of its dominions, had never been disputed. The Bill of Rights made no specification of English or foreigners in this matter. These had, at various times, at, and since the Revolution, been brought into the realm for its defence. These too were times peculiarly marked by the warmth of the people at large for the preservation of their liberties; and yet this step had been taken without the formal consent of Parliament. In the present instance, necessity strongly pleaded for it, and rendered it by no means a matter of choice.

Opposition replied, that the formality of obtaining the consent of Parliament was the more requisite, as times of war are attended with peculiar danger, and people should be more upon their guard at those, than at any other seasons. It had generally happened in most countries, that public freedom had been invaded and lost by armies that had been raised to protect the state from foreign enemies,

enemies. Europe had been enslaved in this manner. Taught by these precedents, and by the imminent danger this nation had experienced in the reigns of the two last Stuarts, it was the duty of the guardians of this kingdom to prevent its being involved in the common destiny of so many others, by enforcing that bill, which was framed in consequence of these dangers.

The spirit of this bill extended to every part of the British dominions. What safety could there be to the liberty of England, if troops surrounded it on every side, ready at a moment's warning to be wafted over? Neither was the distinction of native and foreign troops a matter of indifference.— Was it reasonable to think, that Englishmen had not a greater regard for their countrymen than strangers could be supposed to entertain? Would it not therefore be an enterprize of greater difficulty to oppress this country through means of the natives, than through that of foreigners?

Foreign troops had never been introduced into the realm without the approbation of Parliament. The Hessians who came during the rebellion in the late King's reign, and those who were here in the late war, were called in under that sanction; the first time by an address from both Houses to the Crown; the second, in virtue of a treaty approved in Parliament.

The jealousy of the nation respecting the admittance of foreign troops, was a circumstance well known, and duly attended to by all who valued its regard. During the triumphant administration of the Earl of Chatham, notwithstanding the constant and numerous levies of men made at home, and the necessity of finding recruits for the many branches of service, during that glorious and extensive war, yet so cautious was he of giving the least opening for animadversion, that before he would venture to raise

raise a regiment of Germans to be stationed in America, he carefully procured an act of Parliament for that purpose. In the arrangement of this matter, such deference was shown to received ideas, that only one third part of the officers were foreigners, and the common men were all Protestants: they were to serve in America only, and the highest commissioned officer to be a Lieutenant Colonel. This was a specimen of vigilance and cautiousness in transactions of this kind, which ministers ought never to forget.

Even so lately as the year fifty-eight, upon the Irish Establishment being augmented from twelve to fifteen thousand men, the Crown, though in conjunction with the Irish Parliament, did not think proper to carry that measure into execution, without the formal concurrence of that of Great Britain.

So jealous were the English in this particular, that the very Prince to whom they owed the revolution, notwithstanding all his great and heroic qualities, could not obtain their consent to permit one single regiment of foreigners to remain in this country. They insisted, against his repeated entreaties for their stay, that he should dismiss his favourite corps of Dutch guards, the companions of his many wars, and of his expedition into England, to rescue it from arbitrary power. Those who refused him a request seemingly so reasonable, and which no Prince could have demanded with better grace, knew the consequence of such a precedent, and had the firmness not to grant it.

Such were the principal arguments in the House of Lords, for and against the legality of introducing foreign forces into the kingdom or its dependencies; without consent of Parliament. As an act of indemnity would have been a recognition of its illegality, it was studiously warded off, as well as the motion

tion itself; which was defeated by the previous question. This was carried by a majority of seventy-five to thirty-two.

In the House of Commons, the debates on this important subject were no less warm and elaborate, and consisted of much the same reasonings. A motion was made to the like purpose as in the House of Lords; but it was lost in a similar manner; eighty-one voted for, and two hundred and three against it.

In this manner was a question, of which the magnitude is equal to that of any other fundamental point in the constitution, put off to future decision. While it was in agitation, an incomparable majority of the public agreed in the opinion adopted by the members in the opposition. However they might differ concerning the measures proper to be adopted respecting America, they cordially united with them in reprobating the admission of foreign troops into the kingdom, or its dependencies, without express assent of Parliament.

In the midst of these, and some other debates of a like nature, ministry was employing its attention upon the measures that were to be prosecuted in America. The informations coming from that quarter, represented the strength of the Americans as increasing daily, and the determination of the people to be universally fixed on the most obstinate defence. Their preparations were carried on with unremitting ardour, both by sea and land; and they made no doubt of being able, in the course of the next year, to molest the British trade in such a manner, as would very seriously affect the mercantile interest. They had begun, at the same time, to form connexions with foreign countries and nations; and hoped, in a short time, to place this new correspondence on such a footing, as to draw from them all those supplies from which they were now

now debarred by the interruption of their trade with Britain.

As the designs of the Americans were no secret, it was proposed by the Admiralty, in a Committee of Supply, that the naval establishment of sailors and marines, for the ensuing year, should be augmented to twenty-eight thousand men, and the number of ships of war on the American station should amount to eighty. The land forces were to consist of twenty-five thousand of the selectest troops in the service.

These formidable preparations called up the attention of several of the principal members in the opposition. In order, if it were still possible, to render the operations of war unnecessary, it was proposed to enlarge and facilitate the means of reconciliation. To this purpose a motion was made by one of them, for an address to the King, that the commissioners appointed to act in America, for the purposes held out in the speech, should be authorised to receive proposals for conciliation, from any General Convention, Congress, or other collective body, that should be found to convey the sentiments of one or more of the Continental Colonies, suspending all inquiry into the legal or illegal forms, under which such Colonies might be disposed to treat. A condescendence of this nature was represented as an inducement to the Americans to enter into treaty, and to make concession on their part. This might prevent the effusion of blood which was otherwise so near at hand, and would, in all likelihood, lead to an accommodation that would reconcile the honour and permanent interest of Great Britain with the requisitions of the Colonies.

It was urged in support of this motion, that the English history furnished variety of precedents in favour of such a condescension from the Crown.

Kings

Kings had often treated with conventions of the people assembled without any of the legal forms. They were too wise not to know, that substantial power supercedes all formalities, and that when the public feels its own strength, it is prudent to acknowledge it.. The nation had more than once in this consciousness of its power, disposed of the Crown itself; and Kings, by receiving it at their hands, had acknowledged their right to bestow it in this manner: To go no further back, the revolution was a conspicuous illustration of what had been asserted.. It was a popular convention, that placed the Crown of this kingdom on the heads of William and Mary.

The inference from the many precedents of this kind, that might be quoted from the histories of all nations, was, that neither King nor Parliament would suffer any degradation, by treating with the conventions popularly chosen in America, whatever denomination they assumed, or by whatever methods they were elected. The necessity of the times, was the strongest of all reasons of state; and it militated so powerfully at present for such condescendance, that nothing could exceed the rashness of infisting on a regular course of proceeding, in the midst of so violent a fermentation as that which involved the whole British empire.. The most powerful Princes had yielded to the pressure of circumstances.. The proudest monarch in his day, Lewis the Fourteenth, submitted to the mortification of signing a treaty with his rebellious subjects in the Cevennes. These resolute mountaineers, though but a handful, maintained their ground with such invincible courage and conduct, that two of the best generals in Europe were not able to subdue them: these were Marshals Berwick and Villars, who, after many fruitless endeavours to overcome them, were compelled at last to enter into a negotiation with their principal

principal leader, a man of low extraction, but of unconquerable spirit, and abilities sufficient to engage the French ministry to grant him and his party reasonable terms, sooner than continue to be harassed by an internal enemy.

Examples of this sort, abundance of which could be cited, should induce people to relax of their strict rights; sooner than expose themselves to ruin. True policy consisted in accommodating oneself to exigencies, and difficulties were often made insurmountable through want of pliancy.

But the temper of the times frustrated this attempt. A pacification, it was said, was highly desirable; but a line was now drawn, beyond which government had decreed not to advance. The Congress knew this determination, and had adopted one similar. Were the motion to be carried, it would amount to an acknowledgment of the Congress being a legal assembly, which was at present one of the chief points in debate. Such a condescension would establish the validity of all that body's proceedings, and incline people to decide the whole contest in its favour: the justice and politics of Great Britain would be equally arraigned; and further concessions would of course be expected. It would be more prudent, therefore, to seek some method, less liable to such weighty objections. Time and circumspection might produce one preferable to the present, which was of a nature that would admit of being postponed, till all others had been tried.

This peremptory refusal highly exasperated opposition. It was strongly urged, that circumstances did not correspond with so much inflexibility. Notwithstanding the vaunts of ministry, the formidable army that was to conquer America, subsisted yet but in contemplation. Fifty-five thousand men composed the establishment of the ensuing

year; but they were chiefly drawn up upon paper. Hardly any of the corps to be raised, had attained their due complement. The ministerial arrangements did not agree with the national disposition; no means had been left untried to remedy this defect; but it was radical, and admitted of none but a total change of temper and inclination in the bulk of the people. It was in vain that bounties had been raised, and the usual standard lowered, in order to facilitate the levies. Men would not come in upon any encouragement. Neither Protestants nor Catholics could be prevailed upon to enlist for the American service; and the recruiting officers declared, that they had never before met with so many mortifications in this branch of military business.

It was now become a general observation, that the lower classes had conceived an absolute aversion to the American war. Upon former occasions they would crowd into the service, and the enlisting parties had their choice of fit and able men; but now even the commonest individuals would expostulate upon the iniquity of shedding the blood of their fellow subjects in America. "Were it to fight against the French or Spaniards," to use their own words, "men enough would be found; but it is hard to take away the lives of our own countrymen."

The ministerial side replied to these objections, by observing, that the backwardness alluded to proceeded from natural and obvious causes; such as the more eligible situations in life of the common people in this country, which led them to slight the military profession. It was also an unanswerable proof of the flourishing state of the trade and manufactures throughout the kingdom. Thus, notwithstanding it occasioned a deficiency of hands for military purposes, it argued an internal strength and prosperity.

perity of much more importance, as it shewed the ability of this nation to support the expences of any war; which was a more desirable circumstance than that affluence of volunteers so much boasted, and which often proved no more than a slackness in business, and want of occupation.

A former stricture on the conduct of ministry was renewed upon this occasion. An army of twenty-five thousand men had been announced to the public, as the force intended to be employed against America; but this was represented as wholly inadequate to the purpose of subduing it. The Colonists were not in the case of a foreign nation, whose independence and sovereignty had long been acknowledged, and with whom war is waged merely to obtain a favourable settlement of some points in litigation. They were a people whom we called our subjects, and whose obedience to us we were determined to compass by force of arms. They, on the other hand, acknowledged only a conditional subjection; and were as resolute in maintaining their determination, as we were in asserting ours. The strife was therefore for absolute dominion over them; a species of government, rather than submit to which, they had resolved to undergo any distress and extremity. Actuated by this resolution, the whole continent had in a manner taken up arms. Whoever was fit for a soldier, was become one. This rendered their military force extremely numerous, as all occupations were suspended for the prosecution of war, which was now the sole idea that employed their attention.

In such critical circumstances, decisive measures were indispensable. Nothing should be done by halves; it was by acting in this ineffectual, imprudent manner, that the last campaign had proved so unsuccessful. A repetition of this ill success would necessarily follow the same conduct that produced

it. Ministry might, and would probably blame Generals, for not sending them more acceptable accounts of their proceedings ; but Generals, however brave and experienced, could not counteract the course of natural causes. If the bodies under their command were not of sufficient strength, they could not perform the services entrusted to their execution. Their own skill would be of no use, the valour of their men fruitless, and the money of the nation would be thrown away.

Such was the opinion of some of the best officers in the British service ; men who had long made part of administration, and who did not still scruple to declare their opinion in the most explicit terms. Sentiments of this kind, expressed without reservation, ought to have due weight at the present season, when the commission of any further mistakes of this sort, might involve our affairs on the American continent in irretrievable perplexity.

War and pacification did not in the present moment agree. We should make a decisive option of one, and pursue that only. The interference of the other would defeat it, by which means neither would be carried on in a proper manner. If war was the measure embraced, let it be waged with prudence as well as with spirit ; let such a force be sent as would, by its formidableness, ascertain success, and crush at once all resistance. No treaty, no stipulations should enter into such a system. Submission should be commanded, and the terms prescribed, without suffering a negotiation to be mentioned.

If, on the contrary, peace is the object proposed and really desired, suspend all these formidable and expensive preparations ; declare, in the plainest and most intelligible terms, the conditions on which you are willing to be reconciled : let this declaration be irrevocable ; and then wait an acceptance or denial.

Genial, before your ultimate decision, either to proceed to hostilities, or to disarm.

But this proposal was opposed as too peremptory. The force by sea and land designed for America, would be fully adequate to hold out at once both war and conciliation. When the Colonists beheld the sword in one hand, and the most friendly proffer in the other; when they saw the terrible trial they must undergo, and reflected on the equitableness of the demands made by this country, self-preservation, and their own clear interest, would prevail over all sentiments of inveteracy, and influence them not to refuse what they must perceive they would at last be glad not to have denied at first.

The idea of a conquest of America, was by no means cherished. This included a chain of calamitous consequences, which it was the sincere desire of ministry to avoid. The intent of Britain could not be to ruin the Colonists, but to reclaim them from their obstinacy. This indeed was so inflexible, that nothing short of coercion could effect it. For this reason, every preparation had been made that was necessary to strike terror; but if this was not produced, and force must be used, still it would be carried no farther than was absolutely requisite, and every blow that was struck would be accompanied with offers of reconciliation.

In answer to these ideas, it was urged, that reconciliation was well understood to be at an immense distance; and that when it came, it would arrive, in all probability, on the point of the sword. He that had the longest, would dictate the terms of pacification in America. It was in vain to flatter ourselves the Americans would submit to the desires of Britain at the present; they were flushed with the fortunate accidents of last campaign, and did not

look upon the British troops with any dread. It would be a deed of necessity to convince them by experience of their superiority, otherwise they would remain as refractory as ever, and their presumption would never permit them to subscribe to any treaty of which they were not the framers.

Matters were now brought to a crisis of decision; the business was begun, and it would be no less disgraceful than imprudent to put it off. Britain was in the situation of a warrior, who having buckled on his armour, and girded on his sword, should hesitate to draw it. Such a state of suspense would embolden the Americans; it would increase their ardour, and their endeavours to be prepared to meet us in the field.

The concluding reply to these animadversions was, that a constitutional dependence was the only demand of Great Britain upon her Colonies; that she had taken up arms to enforce this, and meant to use them for no other purpose. While she pretended to no more, the Colonies having no motives of terror in such claims, would not oppose them with such decisiveness and violence, as they would most certainly an avowal to reduce them to the condition of a conquered people. It was much wiser, therefore, to hold up constantly to their view, an invitation to be reconciled, upon such conditions as would preserve all their rights untouched, than to rush at once into extremities, and profess a determination to give them no opportunity of stipulating for themselves.

As conciliatory terms had been proposed, these would be adhered to; and the Americans knowing on what they had to depend, would have neither motive to induce them, or pretence to plead for plunging themselves into further difficulties, in order to avoid the resentment of an unmerciful conqueror. As Britain
dis-

disclaimed this title, and acted in no other light than that of an acknowledged superior demanding his lawful due, the feelings of the Americans would not be insulted in the manner they must be, were the haughty threats and supercilious airs of a despotic oppressor to be assumed: these indeed would not only render them desperate, but justify their resistance, both of which it was equally the duty and the desire of ministry to prevent.

C H A P. XVIII.

Transactions in Great Britain relating to America

1775.

DURING these Parliamentary transactions, the last petition from Congress having lain dormant awhile, though far from being forgotten, was at length brought into notice and discussion.

It had been transiently mentioned several times in debate, and represented by opposition as a ground of conciliation, on which Great Britain and America might have met to their mutual advantage.—Ministry underwent, of course, severe reproaches for having neglected this, and other applications of the like nature.

A copy of the petition having however been laid before the House of Lords, it was moved by a nobleman in the opposition, that Mr. Penn, who had brought it from America, should be examined at the bar of the House. A variety of reasons were alledged for this motion. He was a gentleman of great rank and fortune, and had been Governor of Pennsylvania, now become the centre, as it were, of American sovereignty and politics. He was personally acquainted with most of the members of Congress. As he had long resided in the city where they assembled and held their deliberations, his station, family connections, and personal character, opened to him such avenues to the most useful and authentic information, as few other individuals could command. It was not doubted, therefore, but that much important intelligence would be obtained through his means, especially concerning the temper and inclinations of the people, a subject that

that had been liable to many contradictory representations. As he was at the same time a man of acknowledged discernment, a just dependence might be placed on his report; and possessing so extensive a property in America, he could not be suspected of partiality to the cause of independency, the establishment of which would probably affect the fortune of his family; and, at all events, deprive it of the great powers and prerogatives with which it had been so long invested.

It appeared from this gentleman's testimony, that the charge of aiming at independency, so positively imputed to Congress, was ill founded. The members of that Assembly had been fairly elected, and were men of character and abilities; they had acted conformably to the sense of their constituents; the Colonies had the highest confidence in their integrity, and were entirely governed by their decisions. The determination to resist Great Britain was unanimous, as well as the persuasion that they were fully able to defend themselves against any aggressor. The population of Pennsylvania was so much increased of late years, that it now afforded a militia of sixty thousand men. No less than twenty thousand of these had enrolled themselves to serve without pay, and had armed and embodied themselves before his departure. This body of volunteers included the most reputable people in the Province, and consisted chiefly of individuals possessed of property. They had, in imitation of the Colony of Massachusetts, instituted a body of minute-men, amounting to five thousand. They had, in great abundance, materials for iron cannon; they had already cast brass ordnance at Philadelphia; and fabricated small-arms in great plenty and perfection.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable reception of their former petitions, Congress had formed the most hopeful expectations of that which he brought over.

over. So sanguine was the public idea of its being successful, that it had been stiled the olive branch; and his friends had complimented him upon his being the bearer.

He was, however, very apprehensive, that the disappointment they would feel on receiving intelligence of its treatment in England, would be productive of the most fatal effects. When they found that conciliatory measures had been laid aside here, and that coercion was resolved upon, they would resume their ideas of resistance, and give over all thoughts of reconciliation. In this case, he doubted not they would form connections with foreign powers.

He represented the inclinations of the Americans as peaceable and friendly in the sincerest degree, provided those claims were allowed them on which they had so uniformly insisted. They bore the highest respect to Congress, but were not the less desirous of reconciliation with Great Britain. Congress itself had determined to throw no bars in the way to pacification, and to submit to all the former regulations enacted previous to the present disturbances.

So truly were the Americans satisfied with their subordinate condition, that they commemorated annually the day whereon tranquility was restored to their country, and harmony between Great Britain and America, by the repeal of the stamp act. Had not those acts taken place since that period, which were so obnoxious, and gave them so much offense, all past dissentions would have been buried in oblivion, and the same cordiality and attachment to this country would have subsisted as heretofore.

In consequence of this examination, it was moved, that the petition from the Continental Congress to the King, was ground for a conciliation of the unhappy

unhappy differences subsisting between Great Britain and America. The necessity of an immediate cessation of this fatal dispute was stated in various points of view; the blood that would be shed in America, the distress that would ensue in Great Britain, and the advantages that would accrue to our enemies, were enlarged upon with great energy.

After representing the innumerable difficulties that must attend the carrying on of a war on the American continent, the uncertainty of success, on the one hand, and the certainty of the expence and loss of men on the other, the supporters of this motion adverted to the numberless advantages that would immediately follow from the restoration of peace and mutual amity. They congratulated the public on the auspicious opportunity afforded by the petition, of removing at once every necessity of recurring to odious measures to enforce the authority of the state. Fortune seemed willing to sooth, as it were, the national pride of this country, by inclining the Colonists to lay an humble petition at its feet, imploring it to grant them peace and friendship. Great Britain might now, without derogating from its dignity, consent to treat with America.

The question to be decided between Great Britain and America was now become very simple and clear.—What did Britain claim?—What would America grant? What could the former in justice demand, but the same superintending and sovereign power which she had always exercised, and which had never been denied her, in the regulation of the commerce, and of the external concerns of America? Provided the Colonies were placed on the same footing in those respects, on which they stood at the conclusion of the last war, they would cheerfully return to their union with Great Britain, and to the same dependence they had always professed.

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In this light the petition opened the widest door to reconciliation. Its very expressions breathed the warmest desire of renewing all former attachments. The Colonists particularly declared, that they desired no concession to be made derogatory to the honour of the parent state. They besought the King to recall his troops, by which they meant no more than a suspension of arms. The only preliminary requested by them was to repeal those acts that most oppressed them, which were those by which they were deprived of their charters, their fisheries, and their trade.

A repeal of the obnoxious parts of the regulations made respecting America, since the year fifty-three, the period at which they fixed the commencement of their grievances, would be no less conducive to the interest of Britain, than consistent with justice, and with the wishes of the Americans.

When they beheld that benevolence restored to them which they had been used to experience in happier times, and a sincere readiness to ease them of every burthen of which they had so long complained, they would repay this country with every concession it could reasonably desire. The first step was to meet them on the ground proposed by their petition. This would smoothen at once the path to an entire reconciliation, by convincing them that we were no less earnest than themselves, in our endeavours to restore mutual peace and amity.

It was answered, on the other side, that it was utterly incompatible with the right of sovereignty to receive the petition on which the present motion was grounded. That very reception would be a relinquishment of such claim. To treat with an illegal assembly of men, avowing and justifying their resistance, would be to acknowledge, not only virtually, but formally, that they were the proper deputies of the people of whom they assumed the representation.

presentation. While they pretended to be subjects, they could not meet in any other form than that prescribed by the constitution.

But the reality was, that whatever their pretences might be, their behaviour was the reverse of obedience and loyalty. While acknowledging the right of supremacy and controul in the British legislature, they contradicted it in the most effectual manner in all their actions, by declaring against the exercise of it, whenever it opposed their factious designs. They refused to admit the declaratory act, those for quartering soldiers, and establishing courts of admiralty. They rejected, in short, every regulation they disliked, and yet insisted on their acknowledging the legislative superintendency of Great Britain. What was such a conduct, but an affront to the understanding of the British government?

This conduct of the Americans appeared so full of duplicity and prevarication to some members of the House, that they represented the petition as a base attempt to impose upon the King and Parliament. Covering its intent with specious protestations of loyalty on the one hand, the Congress had, on the other, filled its appeals to the British and Irish nation with malicious and false insinuations against the government of this country. They loaded the Parliament with abuse, denied its lawful authority, and manifestly strove to sow dissension in both kingdoms, and to involve them in reciprocal bloodshed, by inviting the people to unite in espousing their cause, and in resisting the authority of the state.

With men whose behaviour was so insidious, it was imprudent to hold a friendly communication. As they had acted the part of traitors, they ought to be treated as such. It were weakness in the extreme to dissemble the resentment which could not fail

fail being excited by such odious proceedings, and which called for chastisement without further delay.

After a long and violent debate, the motion in favour of the petition was at last rejected, by a division of eighty-six, against thirty-three.

While this contest employed the Upper House, the Lower was filled with no less altercation in consequence of the demands for the supplies on account of the American War. The land-tax was now to be raised to four shillings in the pound. This augmentation occasioned the country gentlemen to turn their attention to an object that concerned them in a more particular manner than any other denomination of subjects.

They had supported the coercive measures against the Colonies, in constant expectation that a revenue would arise from thence, to lessen the weight of the heavy burthens with which this country was loaded. Actuated by this hope, they were willing to advance money while they had a prospect of being relieved from exactions in future, by the contributions which were to be drawn from America.

It was therefore with no small surprize and concern, that they observed, by the language of ministry, that the idea of taxation was in a manner abandoned as inexpedient, or impracticable. They declared, in consequence, that if that essential object was relinquished, they should also recede from their intention of granting money for the prosecution of a contest, from which no substantial benefits were to be derived; and which was attended with an expence, which nothing but the well-founded expectation of large pecuniary emoluments to come could encourage them to support. Unless, therefore, such were the motives in view, they could not, consistently with the public interest, consent to the increase of the land tax.

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These dissentents of the landed gentlemen were a serious alarm to ministry. The only method of pacifying them, was a solemn assurance that the intention of obtaining a revenue from America had never been dropped. Whatever language might have been held on this subject, no more was meant, than that in times of so much trouble and confusion, it was not adviseable to mix that with other causes of dissention and clamour in the Colonies ; but though abandoned for the present, the idea fully subsisted in prospect.

The dispute with America was become more serious, and of more importance than it was originally. The supremacy of the parent state was now called in question : until this great object was ascertained, all other considerations must remain unsettled ; but as soon as this was happily terminated, the business of taxation should be regularly resumed, as a measure which could not be dispensed with, and without which the settlement of the claims of this country would be deficient and incomplete.

This explanatory answer having tranquillised the minds of the country gentlemen, the land tax was fixed at four shillings in the pound, by a majority of one hundred and eighty-two against forty-seven.

The rapidity with which ministry carried all the measures it proposed, did not, however, discourage opposition from making another effort to bring about an accommodation between Great Britain and its Colonies. The same gentleman who, during the sessions of the preceding year, had so vigorously, though ineffectually, introduced a conciliatory proposal, resolved again to make a similar attempt.

The motion to this purpose was prefaced by a petition from the principal cloathing towns in the county of Wilts. The intent of the petition was to counteract another, which had been procured for a contradictory purpose, and to prevent, in the peti-

petitioner's words, the dreadful effects which might arise from such misrepresentation being conveyed to Parliament. It deprecated, in the most feeling and solemn manner, the misery of a civil war, and entreated the House to adopt such measures, as might restore the affectionate intercourse between England and the Colonies.

Mr. Burke, the mover of this conciliatory bill, exerted himself on this occasion with his usual ingenuity and eloquence; and left no argument un-employed, of which the subject would admit.

He represented, with great force of language, the violent temper of the times, and the imputation of want of zeal and patriotism, which those men lay under, who recommended lenity, and endeavoured to avert, by peaceable measures, the ruinous consequences of an opposite conduct.

Three different plans, he observed, were now in contemplation for terminating the present disturbances. The first was, war and conquest; the second, war accompanied with treaty; the third, peace and concession. He examined the means by which the war was to be carried on in America the next campaign, and represented them as inadequate to the end proposed. He reprobated the idea of having recourse to plunder and desolation, in order to compel the enemy to submit. This, he said, would irritate, but never conquer: it would produce hatred and animosity; but never had, nor ever could induce a people to become subjects to another.

He asserted, that there was no probability of success in the various arrangements that were proposed. They had received the sanction of no proper authority: no military or naval officer had given an opinion in their favour; and several of the most eminent in both departments, had disapproved of them. An no man of military experience would vouch for the

the sufficiency of the force, none of those who were commissioned to furnish it with supplies, would answer for its subsistence from the moment it left the sea coast. This would effectually prevent its operations.

He next adverted to the mixture of war and treaty; and condemned it as tending to fruitless delays, and productive of nothing certain and conclusive. It were nugatory to send out pardons to people who had neither applied for, nor would accept of them. Did ministry imagine that nothing was wanting but an amnesty to restore peace in America?

He reprobated, with great severity, the discretionary power vested in Commissioners, of granting general, or particular pardons, in such manner, and to such persons only, as they should think proper, without any direction for their government, on the one hand, or conditions specified as necessary to be observed on the other.

After representing the preceding systems as ineffectual, he brought forwards the plan he had framed upon this occasion; and which was founded upon the idea of concession previous to treaty: he insisted upon the immediate necessity of making concessions: the sooner they were made, the better grace would accompany them. Such a measure would obviate the tediousness incident to treaties, would be more consistent with the dignity of Parliament, and conciliate the Colonies much sooner than concessions arising from stipulations.

The first object in view, ought to be to regain the confidence of the Colonists, which had been utterly lost by the conduct observed towards them during the last ten years. Parliamentary interposition could alone restore it, by becoming security for government, and settling matters on a constitutional foundation.

The right of taxation having occasioned the present dispute, it was a concern to be adjusted previously to all others. In order to have a clear perception of the true relation, which the British Parliament bore to the Colonies, he observed that it ought to be considered not as the representative, but as the sovereign of America. In this light taxation was no part of sovereignty; but ought to be exercised solely by the authority of those who are to be taxed, in the same manner as the people of England authorise their representatives in Parliament.

He pressed, in the most urgent manner, the necessity of relinquishing entirely the claim of taxation; which, indeed, was no longer tenable in the circumstances this country had been placed by the injudiciousness of people in power. There was no dishonour, however, in any sort of settlement of domestic quarrels. Englishmen should not stand upon punctilio among themselves; and would incur less disgrace by yielding an hundred points to each other, in order to procure a termination of their intestine feuds, than by giving up a single point to a foreign enemy. But unless due concessions were made in time to our people in the Colonies, of our own accord, there was much danger that we should make them at last through compulsion.

The bill he had framed for the purpose of conciliation, was upon the model of the famous statute made in the thirty-fifth year of Edward the First, by which the Crown renounced the taxing of the subject without consent of Parliament. He showed the resemblance of the disputes between king and people about taxation at that time, to those that subsisted at present between the British Parliament and the Colonies. The claims of the Crown then, were the same as those of Parliament now, and the complaints remedied by that statute, similar to those

those which the present bill was intended to remove.

Here, therefore, was a precedent of the highest authority, to guide men in the labyrinth wherein they were so unhappily involved. The Crown had been, antecedently to that statute, in the practice of levying money upon the people, by its sole authority ; and vindicated it by the same reasons now alledged by Parliament in support of the like claim over America. The King, it was then argued, being charged with the protection of the realm, must of course be provided with the means requisite for that purpose ; and it would be inconsistent to commit the first to his care, without trusting him also with the second. Upon this ground the right of taxation was maintained as inherent in the Crown. But with all these claims and reasonings on his side, this power of taxing was explicitly and solemnly given up by as great and wise a monarch as ever sat on the English throne.

It was very remarkable that this statute contained nothing tending in anywise to affect the royal prerogative in other matters. The preservation of its other branches was owing, probably, to the surrender of this obnoxious one. The bill in question was perfectly conformable to the spirit of that statute. Great Britain stood in the place of the crown ; America in that of the subject. The circumstances attending the relation in both instances, were sufficiently alike to justify his making the one a precedent for the other in the case of taxation.

He then enumerated the particulars of the bill ; which were a renunciation of the exercise of taxation, without entering into the question of right. A reservation of the power of levying duties for the regulation of commerce ; but the money so raised was to be at the disposal of the General Assembly in whose district it was levied. It empowered the

Crown to call a General Meeting, or Congress of the Colonies, whenever it was judged expedient. The acts of which were to be binding upon all. The duties laid on them in the year sixty-seven, with the late coercive and penal laws, were to be repealed. An act of amnesty was to pass on their laying down their arms within a certain time. All revenue in future was to consist of free gifts, as in England.

The objections to this bill were, that it gave too much away from Great Britain, and yet too little to satisfy the Colonies. Their claims included not only the rescinding of the declaratory act, and the others passed since the year sixty-three, but all the revenue laws made from the time when the act of Trade was passed, to the present period. They objected to all regulations for the express purpose of revenue; but the bill extended no further back than the year sixty-seven. To coincide fully with the demands of America, it ought to have reached as far as the seventy-second year of the last century. Neither did the bill give them relief in the case of Admiralty Courts, of which they so much complained; and which, though altered in some of their forms, were as old as the act of Navigation itself. The bill, in order to be complete, should satisfy them in that, and in all other matters which they considered as grievances.

The bill did not bestow liberally enough with one hand, and lavished too much with the other, by giving up rights which had never been questioned until the present contest. It assigned the duties to be collected for the regulation of commerce, to the disposal of the respective Assemblies, as if levied by their authority: this was, in a manner, acknowledging that Parliament had improperly interfered in disposing of their revenue, and was a virtual repeal of every statute for its disposal, made since the act of Trade.

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It was infisted upon, at the same time, that as a plan of accommodation had been marked out in the speech from the Throne, it would be disrespectful to the Crown, and tend to diminish the confidence of Parliament in the ministry that advised that plan, to prefer another to it, unless it were laid aside by the same authority that framed or recommended it.

Besides the foregoing arguments, others were also alledged, to prove that all endeavours of reconciliation were fruitless in the present temper of the Americans. Coercion alone was the medium, whereby any useful purpose could be effected. The repeated proposals in order to bring about a restoration of peace and amity between Great Britain and the Colonists, had only hardened these, and increased their audacity. While they saw us perpetually busied in devising schemes of this nature, they would most certainly conclude that we were conscious of more internal debility than ministry were willing to own, and that unless this were the case, so proud and haughty a people would not be so ready to stoop to so much condescension.

No debate had for a long time been supported with greater energy and vigour. Both parties displayed on this occasion uncommon eloquence and abilities: it did not terminate till four in the morning; when the previous question being put, the motion was negatived by a majority of two hundred and ten, to one hundred and five.

Some days after the rejection of this famous bill, another was brought into Parliament, prohibiting all intercourse with the Thirteen United Colonies. All American property, at sea, or in harbour, was declared lawful prize to the officers and companies of the King's vessels. It empowered the Crown to appoint commissioners, with authority to grant pardons to individuals, to inquire into general and particular grievances, to determine whether

part or the whole of a Colony were returned to that state of obedience which entitled them to the King's protection, and to take off the restrictions of the bill, as they thought proper.

A bill of this kind, roused immediately the utmost fury of opposition. Were these, it was asked, the terms of reconciliation held out to the Colonies, as an inducement to return to their allegiance? Such a bill was a radical destruction of all hopes of accommodation. Britain and America must now prepare for absolute conquest, or total independency. We had renounced all government over them, but that of the sword; and they must now seek protection from our rage, under the shelter of some foreign power. Their merchant ships would now be converted into privateers; the seas would swarm with them; and our trade in all parts, especially in the West Indies, would become exposed to their depredations.

Offers of pardon, and of being restored to freedom of trade, were made to a people who scorned the one, and had determined to lose the other, rather than submit to the injunctions laid upon them. But ministry should not imagine that the ports of America would remain shut; they would be thrown open to all nations; all states and potentates would be invited to establish an intercourse with them:— And would none accept the invitation? Did ministry flatter itself, that of so many ill-wishers to Britannia, none would bestir themselves on this occasion? No man that was not guilty of wilful ignorance, could harbour a moment's doubt, that this bill would prove a signal to all the enemies of Great Britain, to unite their councils and their arms for the furtherance of that ruin into which she was now precipitating herself, equally to their satisfaction and amazement.

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In support of this bill it was alledged, that it had not altered the nature of things. America was already at war with Great Britain, and resolved to prosecute it by sea, as well as by land, in the same manner as ourselves. We were compelled by the circumstances of distance and situation, to carry on the war on both elements. Were the Americans left the liberty of navigation, they would be supplied with those means of defence which it was our intention to intercept, by making capture of their vessels. The more vigorous and extensive our operations, the sooner hostilities would be at an end.—Mistaken lenity would only lengthen the duration of war, and prevent us from improving those opportunities of success, which would naturally arise from embracing every possible means of distressing the enemy.

The bill was necessarily severe; otherwise it would not answer the point proposed, which was coercion. But its effects would not be felt by such as chose to avoid them. Whoever submitted, was that instant delivered from all apprehensions on that account. Obedience, or chastisement, were now placed before the Americans for their choice.—Every Colony, and every individual on the continent was invited to peace and reconciliation. All that was requested, was an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Great Britain, and a proportionable contribution towards the common exigencies of the empire. Let this be granted, and we became their friends and protectors.

Great apprehensions were pretended for our planters in the West Indies, and our merchants trading thither; but they had little reality, and were principally held out to excite complaints against government, and to represent ministry as guilty of imprudence and mal-administration. Was it any ways probable, that America, notoriously deficient

in so many essential resources, without a navy, or a single ship of any considerable force, her coasts and ports at the command of our fleets, could face the power of Britain at sea? Were we wanting in ships to defend our trade and possessions in the West Indies from the attacks of America?

Foreign Princes and nations were brought into the list of those apprehensions that were entertained on our account: but the situation of such as were most to be guarded against, would probably lead them to look with no gracious eye on the conduct of our people in America. They too had Colonies, and would not, from motives of the clearest interest, rejoice at the revolt of ours. Precedents of this kind were long known to be contagious; it was not therefore from those powers we had malevolent intentions to apprehend.

The establishment of an independent empire in America, was, on many accounts, an object of serious contemplation to all the European states that had possessions in that part of the world. How far the consequences of such a revolution might extend, was a great question among politicians. To say nothing of the pernicious example of such a defection from the parent state, the people newly emerged from dependency, would, in all probability, not remain satisfied with their new condition. They would, with all that enthusiasm which always accompanies fresh acquired liberty, endeavour to extend their power. This would render them very dangerous neighbours, and oblige all people situated on their borders, either to harmonise with their designs, or to oppose them with force. If the first of these happened, it would be hard to tell where this complying disposition would end. In all likelihood, the communication of their freedom would gain them numbers of partisans, and they would be joined by such multitudes, that nothing but a powerful

ful opposition would put a stop to their encroachments. This being the case, was it not incumbent on those who foresaw the probability of these events, to obviate them by the only effectual method that offered, which was to discourage the rebellion broke out in the Colonies belonging to Great Britain, and by no means to molest that power while employed in its suppression.

Opposition having complained, that in its present form, the bill was an irreconcileable mixture of war and conciliation : it was answered, that there could be no contradiction in holding out threats of war, and offers of peace. It was the usual style among all powers at variance ; they were alternatives indispensably connected in such cases. Had nothing been denounced but hostilities, then indeed a fair opening would have been given to condemn the ministerial plan ; but as the proffer of peace accompanied the denunciation of war, the laws of honour and of humanity had been equally observed, and the bill was unimpeachable in that respect.

The clause for vesting the property of the seizures in the officers and ships companies, of the navy, was combated by opposition no less strenuously.— Such a measure, it was said, would be highly disgraceful to the gentlemen in that line of public service. It tended to divest them of all sentiments of honour, and to fill their minds with no other ideas but those of spoil and plunder. Such motives were only fit for pirates, and should be carefully prevented from influencing our naval officers. An abjurement of this kind, while it corrupted the principles even of the superior classes of the navy, would convert the common men into the most unfeeling robbers. When once they had been authorised and used to strip without remorse their countrymen and fellow-subjects, they would lose that eagerness against a foreign enemy which had hitherto

thereto been their peculiar characteristic, and which alone should be tolerated in men of so daring a disposition. They would become habituated to rapine and to theft, and exercise it indiscriminately on all that came in their way. The extinction of national pride, and patriotic ardour against the foes of England, would be the sure consequence of such a regulation. When people have once accustomed themselves to be chiefly guided by sordid views, they quickly forget all others, and are intent upon nothing that does not come recommended in the shape of lucre.

Another object of condemnation from the same quarter, was the extraordinary power lodged in the discretionary management of the commissioners.— It was represented to be of such a nature, as could not, consistent with the spirit of a free government, be trusted to any subjects. The constitution of this country invested the sovereign with it occasionally, but his ministers were responsible for his exercise of it. Without the sanction of any precedent for so uncommon a deviation from the due forms of law, this bill conferred on the commissioners a degree of power which was refused to the Crown itself.

In the course of the various arguments and methods of reasoning employed against this celebrated bill, no few sarcasms were thrown out against it.— Among others, it was observed by one of its staunchest opposers, that the guardian genius of America had this day presided with full influence in the midst of the British councils. He had inspired the measures that had been resolved upon by those who directed the affairs of this country. They were evidently calculated to answer all the purposes which the most violent Americans, and their most zealous adherents could propose, by inducing the people in our Colonies to unite in the most inflexible determination to cast off all dependence on this govern-

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ment, and to establish a free and independent state of their own. He therefore moved that the title of the bill should be altered, and worded in such a manner as should express its real intent and meaning; in which case he was of opinion, it should be stiled a bill for carrying more effectually into execution the resolves of Congress.

After a long and vehement altercation, the motion for the bill was carried, by one hundred and ninety-two votes, against sixty-four.

In the House of Lords, the opposition to this bill was no less keen and severe. Every part of it was adverted to with great strength and freedom of argument and examination. It was reprobated as neither equitable, expedient, or politic. It ranked the Americans among foreign nations, by the hostile declarations it contained against the people and property of that country. It drew a line of separation between Great Britain and its Colonies, and led the way to that dismemberment of the empire which people had so long apprehended would be the final issue of this fatal dispute. The immense ocean that lay between the continent of America and the shores of Britain, would now fix at last the boundaries of both states; and there would henceforth be two nations of Englishmen, the European, and the American.

These were events at which posterity would be struck with amazement, when they reflected on the obstinacy of those who brought them about, and the facility with which they might have been prevented. This bill completed the measure of that severity which refused to listen to the representations of a people, who persisted, in spite of ill treatment, to call themselves the subjects of Great Britain; and who implored its clemency to suspend the sword lifted to strike them, till one more hearing had been granted them. It was a bill framed in
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the hour of fatality to Britain. It created a new country and a new nation ; it planted them in that vast region where once stood the one half of the British empire ; it gave them new inclinations and new interests ; it taught them to look upon what remained of that empire, as their most dangerous and inveterate foe, and to league themselves with all its enemies.

Among the various clauses of this bill, none was treated with so much acrimony as that by which the people belonging to the American vessels, when captured, were indiscriminately compelled, without distinction of persons, to serve as common sailors in the British ships of war. It was described as an unpardonable excess of severity. Such a compulsion upon prisoners, was unprecedented in any case of war, or even of rebellion, among civilized nations.

The ministerial answer to these, and a multiplicity of other charges, was, that the treasonable designs and proceedings of the Americans were a sufficient vindication for the contents of this bill. Their own intentions were no less inimical towards this country, and they were at this hour devising, with equal eagerness, at least, in what manner they could most effectually distress this nation, without suffering themselves to be arrested by any ideas of the calamities our people would endure in consequence of their measures. The war was now become an offensive one on both sides ; and nothing would betray more weakness and imbecility on our part, than to refrain from taking advantage of our enemy, who certainly had shown an equal disposition to improve all such as lay within his reach.

It was with great propriety that the bill vested in the people of the navy, the captures they should make upon the Americans. It would induce that brave and useful body of men, to exert themselves with

with all possible activity ; and would contribute to annoy the enemy more efficaciously than any other expedient.

There was more appearance than reality in the hardship so much complained of, the compelling American sailors to serve on board our men of war. Was it not much less rigorous than to confine them in prison ? They would not fare worse than our own seamen ; they would be rated on the ship's books, and receive the same pay and emoluments as the others ; many of whom were pressed in the service full as much against their inclinations.

It was an easy matter to aggravate evils by elaborate descriptions ; but allowing that we were at the eve of much mischief, Britain had, with undaunted spirit, submitted, at various epochas, to great distresses in support of her interest and reputation. True it was, we were engaged in a civil conflict with a people who were a part of ourselves ; but did we mean suddenly to come to a retraction of all that we had done, or determined to do upon this occasion ? If so, we might search the records of all nations without finding a precedent. But if we still persisted in a regular pursuit, of what the constitutional wisdom and authority of the best government upon earth, had, after the most free and mature deliberation agreed upon, we should, once for all, lay aside these idle discussions about things the nature of which could not be altered, and which only served to embroil us, and to prevent that union of sense and spirit, which would enable us to see the folly of being divided amongst ourselves, in favour of those who were closely united against us ; and to summon that immense stock of strength and courage, which, if properly directed, and acting with unanimity and fidelity, would triumph over much more formidable enemies than those we had now to encounter,

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In the course of this famous debate, it was observed by a great law lord, that the question of original right or wrong, was not so much to be attended to, as the indispensable necessity of self-defence : we were now engaged in a war, and must exert ourselves to prosecute it with success. The criticalness of our circumstances compelled us to fight. The Iaonic speech, which a Scotch General in the army of Gustavus Adolphus made to his soldiers on the point of battle, was precisely applicable to our situation. Pointing to the enemy, " See you those men," said he ; " kill them, my lads, or they will kill you."

After a contestation that lasted till midnight, and was supported with remarkable vigour on both sides, the motion for the commitment of this bill was carried by a division of seventy-eight to nineteen.

It was followed by a protest of unusual length, and great energy, wherein it underwent a severe scrutiny. A minute investigation was made of every obnoxious part, and no censures were spared of which it was thought deserving.

Notwithstanding the discouragement which was necessarily produced by these continual and prodigious majorities in favour of ministerial measures, and the constant rejection of every proposal of a conciliatory tendency, the same gentleman who followed Mr. Burke last session in making an effort of this kind, renewed his attempt in the present as he had done.

The plan of accommodation now proposed by Mr. Hartley, did not much differ from his former, and was framed on the same principle. He was of opinion, that the sentiments of Administration, and those of the Congress were not so widely distant as was imagined. The former seeming to relax considerably in the article of taxation, and the latter acknowledging the superintendency of Parliament.

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The principal parts of his plan, were a suspension of hostilities ; an injunction to the Colonies to establish a trial by jury in criminal cases, in favour of their slaves. On their compliance with this, as a test of their obedience, all the obnoxious laws relating to them since the year fifty-three, were to be repealed, and an act of general indemnity was to pass. After this restoration of tranquility, letters of requisition should, as heretofore, be sent to the different Colonies, for the supplies necessary for their government and defence.

An answer was given to this proposal, by which it was intimated that all others would be equally fruitless. Motions of this kind, it was said, had been frequently made, and the subject of them sufficiently debated. But until the measures proposed from the Throne, had undergone a trial, it would be improper to admit of any others. These motions did not correspond with the sense of a great majority of the House. There was no certainty that if they were accepted on our part, the Americans would be also inclined to accede to them. Sovereignty and taxation went hand in hand ; and it ought not to be supposed, that while this country claimed the first, it could consistently relinquish the last.

While this conciliatory motion was rejected in so decisive a manner, a favourable reception was given to a petition from the Colony of Nova Scotia, presented in consequence of the ministers conciliatory proposition during the last session. It was intended by those who had promoted it, to serve as a precedent for the other Colonies. It came separately from one, which was the mode recommended by ministry : it proposed to raise a revenue in the Colony, under the direction of Parliament. The amount would not have been considerable ; but it would have established the right. The petition
was

was therefore received by administration, and a day appointed to take it into consideration.

The method of granting a revenue proposed by this Colony, was to pay a certain fixed sum in the hundred on the importation of foreign goods. By this regulation the revenue would always bear a due proportion to the wealth and consumption of the Colony. The rate of this duty was to be ascertained by Parliament, and to remain unalterably fixed: the only regulation to be allowed in subsequence, was to make the duty correspond with the comparative value of money at the time the rates were settled.

Opposition contended, that the former revenue, which was to cease on the present taking place, was much superior to it. That no Province had cost more to government, nor had produced less than Nova Scotia. A diminution of the duties it paid, ought, therefore, by no means to be suffered. That the offering of a revenue on the ministerial plan from so inconsiderable a Colony, was hardly worth Parliamentary notice, as it might very justly be suspected to proceed from the influence of its military government.

Ministry replied, that the smallness of the sum to be raised was not to be considered as an objection. It was to be proportioned to the abilities of the Province, and would increase together with them.—That an augmentation on the same principle in the other Colonies, would soon be productive of a considerable revenue: that the example given by this Province was an object of great moment, and ought to be duly encouraged; that the accepting of a moderate income from this Colony, would convince the others that we did not mean to load them with heavy burthens.

For these reasons, a poundage duty of eight in the hundred, was agreed to be laid on all articles that

that were not the produce of the British dominions, either in Europe, or in America, and to be at the disposal of Parliament. On the formal settlement of this matter, all other taxes and duties were to cease in that Colony, such only excepted as regulated commerce; the produce of which was to be carried to the account of the Province.

In consequence of this compliance with the conciliatory proposal, an admittance into this colony was permitted of some foreign goods directly from the place of their growth. This was done with the view of engaging the other Colonies to accede to this proposal, from a prospect of the enlargement of their trade. Other arrangements were also in contemplation, to bring this business to stability and perfection, as great hopes were formed it would prove a model of future taxation, and an incitement to obedience, by the benefits with which it was accompanied.

Had this transaction not happened so late, it is not improbable that it would have effectually contributed to a pacification, by leading the way to conformity with the plan proposed by ministry. It was thought by impartial people to be highly beneficial to the Colonies, and yet that it would, in due time, yield abundantly to the parent state.— But the spirit of discontent and dissention was grown so strong, that no considerations whatever were able to resist it. After bestowing much toil and attention upon this subject, the variety of others that arose daily, very different from this one, and tending all to defeat the arrangements it had produced; and the difficulties of every denomination that were now pressing incessantly upon the ministry, put an entire end to this scheme, and to all further expectation of bringing forward any other of the same tendency.

But even this compliance of Nova Scotia with the desires of ministry, was attended with circumstances which plainly indicated, the people of that Colony were not free from that disposition to complain, which characterised the whole continent.— The petition they had presented, contained a numerous list of grievances, of which they intreated the redress with no less earnestness, though not so much warmth of expression as marked the remonstrances from the other Colonies. A compliance with the requests of this petition was implied as a condition of that obedience which was expected from them in the present instance, and seemed to be considered by them as necessary to insure a permanent connection, and to retain the affections of the people, which, it was insinuated, depended on this proof of readiness in Parliament to oblige them.— Ministry was also reminded of the customary requisitions made when supplies were wanted from the Colonies. Thus the petition, except in the mention of a stated revenue, differed nothing from those that had been presented from the other Colonies.

The relinquishment of this business was a necessary consequence of the multiplicity of greater objects that now took up the whole time and attention of ministers. Opposition was composed of men of the most eminent abilities, and they were indefatigable in their endeavours to expose the conduct of ministry, and to prove it inconsistent with policy, and totally ruinous to the affairs of the kingdom.

Among the various objects against which they now Feb. 29, levelled their censure, were the treaties under 1776. consideration for hiring foreign auxiliaries, in the prosecution of the war against America.

The Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, the Duke of Brunswick, and other German Princes, had agreed to furnish them. Their total amounted to seventeen thousand men. They were represented as troops.

troops equal to any in Europe for the regularity of their discipline. They had served in the last general war, and might in every respect challenge the appellation of veterans.

The reasons assigned by ministry for applying to Germany in the present instance, was the absolute impracticability, from several causes, of raising a sufficiency of men within the realm for the purposes in agitation. But were this feasible, still they would be raw and unskilful, and from their habits of life, unable to undergo the hardships of war with the same degree of vigour as men inured to military fatigues, and whose constitutions were hardened by long service.

An additional motive was, that in a commercial country, such as Great Britain, the preservation of the human species was more peculiarly to be studied, on account of the infinite variety of ways in which it is continually employed. Commerce and manufactures required a prodigious number of hands, and could not possibly spare them for the purposes of war. It was only in large and populous countries, destitute of trade, that soldiers could be procured, without detrimenting the state; and it was for that reason application was made to the sovereigns of those countries from which Britain had already been furnished with troops on former emergencies. When the war was at an end, they would be dismissed, and the expence would cease; whereas, if the levies were made among us, it would still be necessary, on the termination of hostilities, to provide for the half-pay of considerable numbers.

The treaties for obtaining these auxiliaries, had, it was said, been conducted with all the judiciousness and caution that could be used in cases of this difficult nature. The necessity of the times was such, that troops must be obtained, at whatever price they might cost. In this respect, however, nothing exorbitant

bitant had been demanded : the terms were the same as those upon which we had formerly been furnished with troops from the same quarter. Those who were competent judges in these matters, allowed, that all expences considered, these foreign forces would cost the nation less than levies made in this country.

Opposition, on the other hand, denied the validity of all these different assertions. The necessity pleaded by ministry, was founded on their own conduct. They had entangled themselves in perplexities ; and now that the people of this country refused to extricate them from the effects of their imprudence, they applied for help to foreigners. Such was the interpretation that Europe would put on the difficulty they acknowledged in procuring assistance at home. Was it probable that in so populous a nation, a few thousands could not be raised throughout the vast extent of land it inhabited, without bringing immediate distress on commerce ? The very suspension of the trade between Great Britain and the Colonies, would afford a greater number than was now demanded ; and all the world knew that a very short space of time would be required to train them sufficiently to face people who were no more veterans than themselves. But the fact was, that ministerial measures were so unpopular, that the generality of people were utterly unwilling to countenance them.

Objections were made to several parts of the treaties with the above mentioned Princes. The levy money was seven pounds ten shillings a man ; an unreasonable price for a soldier in a country where they are so cheap as in Germany. A large subsidy was to be paid to those Princes, and to be continued after the return of their troops. From the computation of these and other contingencies, it was insisted that a thousand Germans would cost

more

more than fifteen hundred men levied in Britain. But what gave the most offence, was, that twelve thousand of these foreigners, the Hessians, were to remain under the sole command and controul of their own General.

It was replied by ministry, that however great the expence might be represented, one happy circumstance attended it; which was, that it would not be lasting. A body of such excellent soldiers, as the German auxiliaries were universally acknowledged to be, added to such brave troops as our own, would surely prove more than equal to the reduction of America, and the termination of the war in one single campaign. Some indeed were so sanguine, as to assert that so formidable a power would, by its very appearance, put an end to all resistance. All Europe could not outmatch, in military merit, the numerous body of men that would act under the banners of Britain in America. It was by adopting such measures, that matters there would soon be brought to a conclusion. It was expensive, but it would be speedy and decisive; and therein true policy consisted.

Allowing that something more might be given, reckoning man for man, we should consider, that in the one instance we paid our money for a meer recruit, but in the other we procured a real soldier.

To this it was replied by opposition, that neither the force we had collected at so immense a cost, and in which we so highly confided, nor any other we should be able to employ in the prosecution of this war, would conclude it with such facility and speed as ministry had flattered themselves. The situation and local circumstances of America, made a conquest of it impracticable in so small a compass of time as one, or even two campaigns. Such was the opinion of men well conversant in military affairs, and well acquainted with America. The Ameri-

cans, alone and unsupported, were adequate to the task of resisting us, and maintaining their ground a much longer space, if they were but tolerably commanded, and knew how to improve the advantages around them.

This treaty was not less vigorously opposed in the 5th March, House of Lords. The Duke of Richmond moved for an address to the King, requesting him to countermand the march of the German auxiliaries, and to give immediate orders for a suspension of hostilities in America, in order to lay a foundation for a treaty, to compose the differences between Great Britain and her Colonies.

He took an historical view of the treaties between the British and the Hessian Court for many years past; showing that this had gradually risen in its demands, in every successive treaty; and had never departed from any precedent once established. But the present one outwent all the former in the exorbitancy of its conditions. He asserted, from the calculations he had made, that the body of seventeen thousand three hundred foreigners, taken into British pay, would, including all contingencies, occasion an expence of no less than fifteen hundred thousand pound within the course of a twelve-month; a sum greater than was ever yet known to be expended for the maintenance of such a body of men in the like space of time.

These were serious considerations in the depressed situation of our affairs; especially when we adverted to that dreadful load of debt which was hourly accumulating. The alarming state of our finances had, more than twelve years before, been pleaded as an inducement to sheath our swords in the midst of victories and conquests on every side, that had laid every enemy at our feet, and enabled us to complete the ruin of every foe this nation had to fear. But our triumphant career was stopped by

the cry of those who predicted certain ruin to this country, if it persisted any longer in the pursuit of its successes. To the astonishment of Europe, we gave up the many just hopes and expectations we had formed, to the clamour of men who represented the nation as insolvent, and unable to advance a step further in the augmentation of its debts, or the increase of its expences.

What propitious event had, since the lapse of twelve years, brought about so great an alteration in the state of our finances, as to enable us to change the system of our politics, so much recommended at that period? Was it the payment of seven millions out of one hundred and fifty? What infatuation could precipitate a government, once famed for its wisdom, into a war, the consequences of which must, at all events, prove ruinous? No reputation, no benefit, could possibly accrue from it. It was an intestine war, calculated for the certain detriment of the state, which ever of the parties had the upper hand; and it was equally disgraceful, as it showed we wanted prudence and temper in the management of our domestic concerns.

A circumstance that struck every sensible observer, was the eagerness and animosity with which this unhappy quarrel was prosecuted. There had been a mixture of malignity and contempt in the measures that had for several years been adopted against the Colonies; and now that their firmness and perseverance in the assertion of their just rights was not to be overcome with threats and supercilious language, they were to be devoted to the horrors of war, and to be treated as a nation from which we had experienced every sort of contumelious usage.

Unprovided with a sufficient number of troops for the cruel purposes designed, or unable to prevail upon the natives of this country to lend their hands to such a sanguinary business, ministers had

applied to those foreign Princes who traded in human blood, and hired armies of mercenaries for the work of destruction. They forgot with what virulence they had reprobated the employing of foreigners, at the conclusion of the last peace; how impolitic it appeared in their eyes, how inconsistent with the interest of this nation, how fatal in its tendency. Continental connections were at that time condemned with a violence the more astonishing and ill founded, as by means of our alliance with an illustrious monarch, we had not only supported him against his numerous enemies, but occasioned those diversions in Germany of the forces of our most formidable enemy, which had prevented him from attending to the defence of his transmarined dominions, and enabled us to make an entire conquest of them. But these were objects unattended to by those politicians who then directed our affairs. They had conceived such an antipathy to foreign alliances, that of whatsoever service they could be proved, or however pressing the necessity of not being wholly destitute of friends upon the continent, still they disclaimed all ideas of that nature, and maintained that we stood in no need of alliances abroad, and were quite self-sufficient at home.

At the expiration of a few years, the same set of individuals now came forwards with a system opposite and contradictory in every respect. It was not only a mere foreign alliance that was sought and courted; an army of foreigners was now to be introduced into the British dominions; but not to protect them from invasion, not to deliver them from the ravages of an hostile army, but to assist one half of the inhabitants in massacring the other.

It was strongly asserted by opposition, that this foreign connection would be productive of the most fatal events. Hitherto this unhappy dispute had been

been confined to the people of the British empire : the Colonies did not seem in the least inclined to call in any other nation as umpire. They apparently depended upon themselves for its support and termination ; and did not, in all probability, imagine that we could be so imprudent as to associate others to our domestic feuds. But when they saw that we had recourse to this odious expedient, they would no longer think themselves bound to stand singly in the contest ; they would, after our example, apply to strangers for assistance. And could they be censured for departing from any line of moderation, while we manifested by our conduct that we were determined to observe none ?

But it was much to be feared that their imitation of our measures, would be far more dangerous to us, than our precedent would be to them. Inconsiderable and needy Princes were no allies for them. They would connect themselves with such, as instead of requiring subsidies for their assistance, would supply them with men and money ; such as would espouse their quarrel, not from mercenary motives, but from hostile considerations to this country, from ancient habits of inveteracy, from a thirst of revenge for the losses and humiliations occasioned by our arms.— These were the allies that would fly to their succour, on the first summons ; no pecuniary stipulations would retard them ; such a prize as America would command any price, and any terms. A retaliation of all the calamities and disgraces they had suffered at our hands, would arm on such an occasion every state and nation that bore an enmity to Britain.

No opportunity to distress this country was ever equal to that which it now afforded to the many who were seeking it. The scene of military operations would be in another hemisphere ; thither we must send our armies, our fleets, our treasures, every fighting man we could raise at home, and every
mer-

mercenary we could hire from abroad. The best of our blood would be shed ; the bravest of our people would be torn from us ; we should in the course of this deadly feud, be drained of our inhabitants, and of our substance, and become exposed at last to the attacks at home of those watchful rivals, who never yet suffered an occasion to escape them to humble or to injure this country.

Could men, who were not abandoned to the meanest sentiments of vindictiveness, lay their hands on their bosoms, and profess their sincere approbation of measures that were evidently pregnant with such evils ? Could they give their assent, without wounding their conscience, to a system that presented nothing but bloodshed and desolation, and the avowed intent of which was the barbarous compulsion of part of their fellow subjects to comply with the absolute will of the other part ? What motives of sufficient weight could be stated for refusing to listen to the remonstrances of those who pointed out a prevention of all these evils ? And what arguments could preponderate against a request to suspend them a while, that Parliament might have time again to ponder how far it ought in justice and humanity to recede from the strictness of its demands, and to fix on such final terms, as every dispassionate man should acknowledge to be honourable to the parent state, and not injurious to so respectable a number of British subjects as inhabited the large continent of America.

These various allegations were combated on the part of ministry by much the same reasonings as had been used in the House of Commons. The plea of necessity was a shield with which they covered all the measures they had lately adopted. But they represented them not only as necessary, but as judicious and well concerted. That of treating with foreign Princes for the loan of their troops, they asserted,

asserted, was far from detrimental ; the terms were not exorbitant, considering how indispensably they were known to be wanted, the extraordinary service they were to go upon, the lands and seas they were to traverse in their going forth and coming home, and the very great uncertainty of their return.

The computation of the expences attending them was much overrated. But were it otherwise, had the expence been even greater, the emergency was such, that we must have complied with any terms demanded. Still, however, we should probably have no reason to complain : if the cost was great, so was the purchase ; no less than the subjugation of the American continent in a campaign or two. Such was the clear expectation of those who were deemed fully adequate to the consideration of the subject.

Did those, continued ministry, who disapproved of their measures, wish them to give up the contest, and abandon the Americans to those they chused to adopt ? there was no medium between this, and the prosecution of the system of enforcing obedience.— Every proof had been given that nothing less would reduce and keep them within the bounds of subjection. This indeed they had totally cast off, and could no longer be viewed in the light of subjects : they were in their inclinations no part of the British empire. But that was no argument why we should consent to this relinquishment. By such conduct they had forfeited the rights they enjoyed in common with us ; but it did not follow that our claims upon them had lost their validity : by renouncing us, they had thrown themselves out of our protection, and become strangers ; as such we now treated them, and should continue to do, until they returned to a due sense of the connection that ought to subsist between a parent state and its dependencies. These were cogent reasons why we should not scruple to employ against them both our own forces and those

those of our allies; who, in this case, had a much better title to be considered as a part of ourselves, and against whom it was highly unbecoming to break out into such discontent, as they certainly came to befriend us, and to stand by our side in asserting our rights.

Enough had been said to convince impartial people that little was to be apprehended from the countenance that foreign powers might give to America: were policy out of the question, we might have some causes for apprehension: but it was so evident that their plainest interests militated against their undertaking the defence of our Colonies, that it was not a subject deserving of discussion. But allowing it to be supposable that they should be guilty of such infatuation, was not this an additional motive to exert ourselves with all speed, in order to terminate the contest, before they were ready to enter into it as parties against us?

After long and violent debates, the question upon this important subject was carried in favour of ministry, by one hundred votes to thirty-two, in the House of Peers, and by two hundred and forty-two against eighty-eight, in the House of Commons.

After the decision of this business, another came on that caused no less ferment. The Secretary at March 11th, War gave notice, that the sum of eight

1776. hundred and forty-five thousand pounds, would be necessary to defray the extraordinary expences of the land-forces, and other services incurred from the commencement of March of the preceding year, to the end of January of the present.

An intimation of this nature, excited one of the most violent storms of opposition that was ever known. Never, said they, was so vast a demand made for contingent expences incurred in so short a time. It was truly a demand for extraordinaries, as no man could tell in what manner such an im-

mense sum could possibly have been employed in the narrow sphere to which its operations had been confined, though every one knew that they had been of no efficacy.

They adduced the journals of several victorious campaigns, to prove the exorbitancy of such a demand. Among others, they dwelt upon that of seventeen hundred and sixty, the year when Canada was finally reduced. As that event had happened only fifteen years before, the value of money, and the cost of charges bearing much the same proportion as at the present time, they were the better able to make a comparative estimate.

From the various calculations they made on this occasion, they inferred that no less than one hundred pounds a man had been expended upon the garrison of Boston, consisting of about ten thousand men, within less than the term of a year; during which time, they had been reduced to great extremities, through want of provisions, and had endured a variety of wretchedness.

If such were to be the future demands of ministry, in what manner would they provide for the support of an army of more than fifty thousand men in America? who certainly would not make a conquest of it in two or three campaigns, whatever some weak and unintelligent individuals had thought proper to boast.

Loaded with such enormous contingencies, how was the nation to furnish the other no less requisite expences for the navy and standing forces at home? all which must now be considerably augmented if we meant to put ourselves on a footing of security.

Never had ministry been assailed with such vehemence. They stood their ground, however, on the approbation and authority of Parliament. They had, said they, the legal sanction of a constitutional majority for all the measures they had taken. The system they

they pursued was not of yesterday; it had been the established rule of acting for years, and was not more strongly countenanced at the present moment, than it had been at the first hour. Such a continual uninterrupted plurality of suffrages, evinced a probability of rectitude in the measures which they so invariably approved. Neither were ministers so wedded to their own opinions, as to have formed a determination to persist in them, should the general sentiments of that body undergo a change. But while the representatives of the nation adhered with such remarkable inflexibility to the ideas they had so long maintained, ministry was fully persuaded that these ideas rested on a solid foundation. This conviction, instead of being shaken, gathered vigour from the very multitude of arguments that had been brought to invalidate the opinions of this majority. The indisputable abilities of those who adduced them, their ingenuity, their eloquence, their knowledge, their industry, were eminently conspicuous, and excited universal admiration: but with all their exertions, and solicitude to establish their own sentiments, they constantly failed, and their opponents remained as firmly as ever in the possession of their own ground. What must a cool and dispassionate observer infer from this, but that something radically defective was perceived in the notions of the minority, by that incessant and prodigious majority that dissented from them? This perpetual inferiority of number, though not an unanswerable proof, was, however, a strong presumption that their reasonings, though urged with great powers of language and imagination, had not strength enough to convince the judgment of their opponents, however they might prove entertaining, and display the talents of the speakers.

Confiding therefore in the unaltered disposition of mind that had so long and so strikingly characterised

so many respectable members of this, and the preceding Parliaments, ministry thought itself in duty bound to tread in the same path it had so long continued in, not doubting but the issue would prove its conduct to have been equally steady and prudent.

As to the expenditure of those sums, the vastness of which was alluded to with such acrimony, and loaded with such heavy censures, an impartial enquiry would show, whether they had been properly applied. It ought to be remembered, that the operations they were employed in, were equally numerous and chargeable; and that the various undertakings which the spirit of the nation had resolved upon, were of so novel and difficult a nature, as to require not only the most resolute exertions, but the most extensive and liberal support.

The ill success of the present campaign, was to be attributed to the unexpected obstinacy of the Colonies. They persisted, against their evident interest, in a refusal of accommodation upon the fair and easy terms that had been proposed to them a twelve-month ago. Their uncompliance had induced the Province of Massachuset to exercise that resistance for which, not imagining it would have been carried to such extremities, we had not made an adequate preparation: but now that nothing but the most daring and stubborn opposition was expected from the Colonists, we should no longer withhold our strength; we should put it forth in such a manner, as would show that Britain was fully able to crush them. Parliament had sufficiently hearkened to the dictates of moderation, to be henceforth absolved of the imputation of severity, in letting loose the vengeance of the kingdom against such incorrigible offenders. A fession or two more of firmness and vigour, would bring about an alteration of affairs,

fairs, that would make the Colonies repent the provocations they had given to this country.

After the most violent altercation, the motion for the supply was carried by a majority of one hundred and eighty to fifty-seven.

Notwithstanding the minority saw themselves overwhelmed upon every occasion, by the irresistible torrent of numbers, their perseverance still remained unshaken. March 14th, 1776, another attempt was made in the House of Peers to prevent a continuance of hostilities. It was moved by the Duke of Grafton, that an address should be presented to the Throne, requesting that, in order to stop the further effusion of blood, and to manifest the sincere desire of King and Parliament to restore peace, and to redress grievances, a proclamation might be issued, declaring that if the Colonies should present a petition to the commander in chief of his Majesty's forces in America, or to the commissioners appointed for such purposes, setting forth what they considered to be their just rights, and real grievances, the King would consent to a suspension of arms, and refer their petition to Parliament, where they might depend it would be duly considered and answered.

Among a variety of arguments in support of this motion, it was represented as peculiarly proper at a time when a new opinion had gone forth, very alarming to the Americans, and highly displeasing to all true lovers of the constitution. It had been asserted in the other House, that the Americans did not deserve to be treated with; and that they ought to be reduced to unconditional submission. Such an assertion tended clearly to increase their repugnance to a reconciliation, and to excite them to make the most desperate efforts to resist us. It militated no less against the principles of the British government: it recommended a method of proceeding with

with subjects, similar to those adopted in absolute monarchies abroad; where insurrections are punished in a summary and discretionary manner, utterly inconsistent with the spirit of freedom.

But there was another motive to induce this country to suspend the blows it was preparing to strike. The long apprehended and frequently predicted interference of foreigners in the cause of America, began already to appear. Intelligence was received that two French gentlemen had some time ago arrived in America, and held a conference with General Washington, by whom they were referred to the Continental Congress, to which they immediately repaired.

Such a circumstance ought to awaken our most serious attention. It showed what we had to expect if the quarrel were to last. It opened a prospect, which all assurances, from whatever authority they might proceed, could not hide from the eye of the discerning. The longer we delayed in coming to terms with our Colonies, the greater the danger would be, that the instigations of foreigners would render them indifferent or averse to treating. Such favourable offers and promises would be held out to them, as would make those laid before them on our part, hardly worth attending to. It was not to be doubted that temptations of every sort would be used, to allure them into other connections, and to prevail upon them to throw off their allegiance to this country. No time was therefore to be lost in striving to obviate those evils by all such means as were compatible with the dignity of the British nation. By protracting this necessary business, such difficulties might intervene as would render it impracticable. The Americans, confiding in the support they would be secretly promised, might rise in their demands, and require such concessions, as would be too degrading for us to yield in any situation. These

considerations, which were obvious and required no further comment, ought to induce all well-wishers to this country, to hasten, by the most speedy and prudent methods, an accommodation with America.

Were ministry, after so solemn a warning as they had received on this day, to refuse with their wonted perverseness to desist from those measures that threatened this country with so many dangers, what must the Colonies infer from it, but that the British ministry harboured the most vindictive designs against them, and were determined to labour the enforcement of them at all hazards? They would hear what had passed in the House on this critical day; and would learn with no less astonishment than indignation, that no motives of safety to Britain, no principles of humanity for the people of America, had been able to retard a moment, the vengeance meditated against them for having dared to oppose the supreme will of the people in power on this side of the ocean.

Administration ought to reflect, that the season was at hand for operations: when once begun, the minds of people would be made up, as it were, for what might happen, and have taken their determination to wait the events of the campaign, before they would resume the consideration of any subjects, but those relating to war. Britain was now to decide, perhaps for the last time, whether a treaty or the sword should end the contest. Obstinacy on its part, would not fail to render the Americans equally obstinate: they would take example from us, and after having so often appeared at our feet, in the posture of supplicants, they would throw off that character, and resolve henceforth to meet us on the footing of equals.

Such were the reasonings on the side of those who supported the motion. But they were totally ineffectual;

factual : the die was cast between Great Britain and America ; and there seemed a general disposition on both sides to commit their fate to the decision of arms. The moderate and dispassionate had exhausted all their stock of arguments ; and were now reduced to the necessity of standing still, and patiently expecting that some unpropitious event would incline one of the parties to listen to overtures.

The general answer to the allegations of the minority on this occasion, was, that no reliance could be placed on the assurances, so incessantly reiterated by the Colonists, of their desire to terminate matters amicably, and to return to a state of tranquility and obedience. Their language had indeed all the merit of plausibility ; but their actions did not correspond with their protestations. They had not evidently formed among themselves, and agreed to any fixed terms of pacification ; otherwise they would have specified them, before they would have suffered this country to have gone such lengths in its preparations to reduce them. It was highly probable that they doubted its ability to compel them to submission, and in consequence of this idea, had proposed to deceive us into hopes of settling matters to our satisfaction, with a view to gain time for the accomplishment of the various schemes they were projecting, and had now brought so forwards, that no inducements that we could hold out, would be sufficient to counterbalance their eagerness to give them a full trial.

Nothing, therefore, remained for Great Britain, in the present circumstances of affairs, but, in imitation of the Colonies, to have recourse also to a trial of her own strength, and of those measures for which she had made such vast preparations. All was now completed for the last scene of the business that was to be transacted between Great Britain and America. As minority had insinuated that this lat-

ter would not stoop any longer to the stile of supplication, it was become the more requisite for majority to assume at once the tone of masters, and to speak to its rebellious subjects with that firmness and authority which men are entitled to use with inferiors, who have offended them, and refuse to make that reparation which is due to the dignity of a superior.

After an altercation that lasted till very late in the night, the Duke of Grafton's motion was rejected by a division of ninety-one votes, to thirty-one.

Thus ended a debate which put a period, for a while, to all attempts to conciliatory measures. The standard of reciprocal defiance seemed now to be hoisted, and both parties consenting to take their last trial in the field.

C H A P. XIX.

Evacuation of Boston.—Siege of Quebec raised.—Provincials defeated in Canada.—Transactions in North and South Carolina, and Virginia.

1776.

WHILE these Parliamentary discussions were taking place, and filling the whole nation with anxiety and expectation how they would terminate, scenes of a different nature were acting in America.

The British troops at Boston, had now suffered a long and tedious blockade. From the nineteenth day of April, made for ever memorable by the affair of Lexington, they had been closely invested on every side, and cut off from every refreshment and relief, which a garrison, consisting of such numbers of sick and wounded, naturally required.

They were reduced to the utmost extremities by the non-arrival of those victuallers which government had fitted out, and loaded with all manner of provisions, at so prodigious an expence. The information they received of the quantities designed for them, had raised their spirits, and filled their minds with gratitude at the proof thus given of the concern which their country felt for them; but their expectations were long disappointed; and they had many misfortunes to undergo before they received any part of those much wanted supplies.

Several of these vessels, after weathering out the continual storms they had met with, were taken by the enemy in the very sight of port. Contrary winds, unfavourableness of tides, and other circumstances of weather and position, prevented the men of war from coming to their assistance. The greater number of the coal ships were lost in this manner. The

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deprivation of these was severely felt in a climate, where the rigour of the winter renders fuel so indispensably necessary.

The situation of those inhabitants who adhered to the cause of America, was peculiarly calamitous. Imprisoned and debarred of all communication with their friends, they were exposed to the ill treatment of the garrison; and though protected from harsh usage to their persons, by the native generosity of the British nation, still they were liable to those contemptuous marks of aversion, from which men are so unwilling to abstain in their domestic feuds. As they were not entitled to the same regards as the military, their allowance was so scanty, that they were almost in want of necessaries.

The length of the siege, and continual expenditure of military stores, in the numberless branches of service that consumed such quantities, occasioned an apprehension that they would not last till the arrival of a fresh supply. To the dread of wanting ammunition, was added that of being soon short of salt provisions; which were, during a long time, the only food the garrison could depend upon for subsistence.

In the midst of these distresses, the courage and resolution of the British military was conspicuous, and fully refuted the invidious charge so frequently in the mouths of foreigners, of the French especially, that the English are unfit for the hardships of war, and though brave and intrepid in the field, are unable to endure fatigue, unless provided with all the conveniences of life.

They underwent, in the successive rotation of duty, all the severities of a winter campaign in this rigorous climate. Those who were stationed on Bunker's-Hill, had no other shelter than their tents against its unceasing inclemency during this terrible season. Here they lay exposed to winds, snows, storms,

storms, and cold, almost intolerable to British constitutions.

The wants of various kinds with which in the mean time they were assailed, obliged them to have recourse to every expedient that industry sharpened by suffering can invent. That of fuel, which they could bear least of any, was in some degree remedied by the timber of houses which they destroyed for that purpose.

As the deficiency of provisions began to be alarming, vessels were dispatched to the West Indies to procure what could be spared or obtained. But the condition of the islands was such, that they feared to be straitened themselves, and could afford little assistance. Their stock was so low, and their expectations of being relieved when it was expended, were so precarious, that they were constrained to husband it with the strictest parsimony, and could not admit others to a participation.

In default of this resource, armed ships and transports were ordered to Georgia, with an intent to procure rice, and what other refreshments could be got. But the inhabitants, took up arms, opposed their landing, and permitted no intercourse with the shore. This occasioned violence on each side. Cannons were planted on the beach, and an engagement ensued, which terminated to the disadvantage of the armed vessels. They lost seven ships loaded with rice, which were set on fire by the enemy.

While the British troops were undergoing these distresses, the Provincials were well covered in their encampment before Boston, and supplied with all necessaries and comforts. Their design was to wait till the freezing season began, for a more vigorous prosecution of hostilities. Their intentions were to avail themselves of it, in order to strike such a decisive blow, as would, if executed according to the

plan proposed, put at once a final conclusion to all the hopes of Britain in this quarter.

The latter end of December, is the time when the frost usually sets in with great severity in New England. The harbour of Boston, and all the rivers and waters in its environs, are covered with a depth of ice sufficient to bear any weight. This was the passage over which their determination was to force their entrance into Boston, and to make an attack upon the shipping. They doubted not, with the great force that would be collected from all parts for an enterprize of such importance, to make themselves masters of the town and garrison, and to take or destroy every ship in the harbour.

Had the severity of the frost corresponded with their expectations, it is not improbable that they would have been able to execute their designs. Upwards of sixty thousand men would have been the force employed from the four Provinces of New England only, besides the multitudes that would have crowded from the other Colonies, to have a share in this destruction of the British fleet and army.

But fortunately for both, the winter proved unusually mild, and they waited in vain for its assistance in the operations they had projected. They were, much against their will, obliged to remain inactive, and suffer the garrison to enjoy some tranquility as well as themselves.

In the mean time, the speech made by the King at the opening of the session, was brought over to America, together with intelligence of the reception which the petition from the Continental Congress had met with from ministry. The arrival of this news at the camp before Boston exasperated the provincials to a greater degree than had ever been experienced. They testified the excesses of their rage, by burning publicly the Royal speech, in the midst of execrations at those who had advised it. Having
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by this act, divested themselves of all remains of respect or attachment for any object that related to Britain, they next proceeded to an alteration of their colours. From a plain red ground, they changed them to thirteen stripes, as a denotation of the number of the United Colonies.

The winter, though severe enough to induce both parties to remain quiet in their quarters, did not prevent the small craft belonging to Massachuset from exerting themselves very successfully against the vessels arriving from England with supplies and stores. A tolerable number had found means to enter the port of Boston, where they proved of great relief to the garrison; but the activity of the American cruizers was such, that many fell into their hands, to the vast detriment of the troops, from the particular importance of their cargoes.

Among the captures they were continually making, was unfortunately an ordnance vessel, which had separated from her convoy. Being of no force, she was compelled to surrender to a small privateer. This was one of the most useful prizes that could have fallen into their hands. She contained a cargo said to be worth fifty thousand pounds. It consisted of a great number of brass cannon, with a large quantity of small-arms, and a vast variety of military stores. It enabled the Provincial army to resume their military operations with additional advantage, and to make a much more formidable appearance than before.

As soon as the severity of the weather began to abate, the provincials indicated by their motions, that they intended to press the town with more vigour than ever. The fact was, that General Washington had received orders to exert his utmost activity, in order to reduce the British forces either to surrender, or to evacuate the place, before the succours

cours could arrive which were now shortly expected from England.

During the night of the second of March, a battery was opened on the Western side of the town, from whence it was severely fired upon with cannons and bombs; and on the fifth, it was attacked from another battery on the Eastern shore. The suddenness and expedition with which the Provincials acquitted themselves on this occasion, astonished the most experienced of the British officers. Fourteen days did the garrison experience the most dreadful cannonade and bombardment, without the least intermission.

The situation of the troops became very alarming, from the vivacity and ardour which seemed to animate the operations of the enemy, and the certainty of their being able to surround and command every part of Boston, as well as of the harbour, from the high grounds, on which they were now occupied in erecting batteries. No medium appeared to remain between dislodging the Provincials from their new works, or quitting the town.

The spirit of the General was too great to embrace the latter measure, until he had tried every method that was practicable to effect the former. To this intent, a select body was prepared for embarkation, in order to land at the foot of the hill called Dorchester Neck, projecting into the bay on the Eastern side of the town. The Provincials had fortified it in such a manner, as would, in all probability, have rendered the attacking of it no less bloody and destructive than that of Bunker's-Hill, even if it had succeeded; but the works were so strong, so well provided with artillery, and defended by such numbers, that there was little prospect of forcing them. As they stood on a high ground, the Provincials had provided upwards of a hundred hogsheads filled with stones, to roll down the hill upon the British lines,

lines, as they advanced ; and the ascent was so steep, that the ranks must infallibly have been broken before they could have reached the summit, and attacked the trenches.

Before the full discovery of this strength, every preparation had been made for a most vigorous attack. But while the troops were making ready to embark, a dreadful storm came on unexpectedly in the night, and prevented the design from taking place then. It was resumed the next morning ; but on a closer inspection, it was judged unadvisable to proceed, as it could only have tended to sacrifice the lives of a great number of brave men to no purpose.

It was however with much reluctance, that the British General, his officers, and soldiers, could prevail upon themselves to desist from this desperate and impracticable attempt. They were conscious of the high opinion entertained of them by their countrymen at home, and of the sanguine expectations that had been formed from their bravery.— They knew that they were looked upon as superior in every military consideration to the enemy they had been sent to encounter, and that no suspicion was harboured that he would have been able to withstand them. These reflections filled them with indignation at the peculiarity of their fate. They were inclosed on all sides in such a manner, as made it impossible for them to disengage themselves, and take possession of such ground as would have enabled them to come at the enemy. Every effort they made to that intent, laid them open to inevitable destruction. In such mortifying circumstances, a retreat seemed the only alternative left them. But here they were met by that point of honour which is so powerful in men of spirit, and so often induces them to devote themselves to certain ruin, sooner than expose it to the least blemish,

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After much deliberation, it was at length concluded, that to remain any longer in Boston, would be imprudence and temerity in the highest degree, as it must prove infallibly the loss of the whole army. A determination was therefore taken to embark it, with all its appurtenances, and to abandon a place that was no longer tenable. A retreat of this nature was not, however, without its difficulties. The enemy was posted on all the commanding grounds, and at hand to make a quick and dangerous impression, wherever they thought proper. Fortunately the provincials remained within their works, and seemed not in the least inclined to form any obstruction to the design. Probably they were glad to facilitate a measure, by which they recovered without bloodshed, possession of a town of the first importance in North America. Had they proceeded to any hostilities to prevent it, they knew it was in the power of the British army to have instantly reduced the town to ashes; a misfortune which it would have taken many years to repair.

Near a fortnight was consumed in carrying this irksome measure into execution. Had the embarkation of the military and warlike stores been the only object, it would have been readily accomplished; but provision was also to be made for the departure of almost two thousand of the inhabitants, whose adherence to the cause of government, obliged them to accompany the army for their safety.

Much embarrassment and anxiety attended the removal of such multitudes, together with their effects, and the baggage of the army, which was very considerable. The sick and wounded were very numerous, and with the women and children, occasioned by their helpless condition, an additional distress. The attention and care of the General in this trying situation, reflected equal honour upon his conduct and humanity: he had borne the disappoint-

pointments and vexations of a situation unworthy of his courage, with unshaken firmness; he now faced the mortifying perplexities with which he was surrounded, with no less composure.

The army was at this time full of discontents.—reinforcements had been long expected, and had not come; both officers and soldiers thought themselves neglected; near ten months were elapsed since the arrival of the last, and the impossibility of their taking the field without them was well known in England. Since the commencement of November, no regular and certain advice had been received of what was to be their destination. This created murmurs and complaints that could not be easily quelled, as they did not appear ill founded. It seemed as if they were considered as bound in some measure to deliver themselves from the difficulties that pressed upon them, by their own exertions. Ill success, wants, and inconveniences, increased this ill humour, which was further aggravated by the jealousies and dissensions that began to prevail between the army and navy.

In this unhappy disposition of mind, and derangement of affairs, a dangerous voyage was to be undertaken. Halifax, in Nova Scotia, was the port to which the fleet was bound. The distance was not great, but the storminess of the coast, and the tempestuousness of the season, were highly alarming; it was now the middle of March; the equinoctial winds were set in, and those from the north-east were equally strong and boisterous. Were they to be blown out to sea, and obliged to steer for the West Indies, their provisions were too scanty for such a voyage. But should they arrive in safety at the destined port, still they had but little comfort and relief to find in such a bleak and barren country as Nova Scotia.

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After the embarkation had been effected, it was a whole week before the fleet could put to sea. Contrary to their apprehensions, the wind and weather proved however fair at last, and their passage to Halifax was remarkably favourable. On their departure from Boston, several ships of force were stationed there, for the protection of the vessels arriving from England; but the bay was so extensive, and so full of small harbours for privateers to lie on the watch, that they could not, with all their vigilance, prevent a number of ships from falling into the hands of the provincials. What made their loss the heavier, they were laden with arms and such warlike stores as were most needed by the enemy. Some transports were also taken with troops on board, which ran into the harbour, not knowing the place was evacuated.

In this manner did Boston return to the possession of the people of Massachusetts. The boats employed in the embarkation had not entirely completed it, when the provincials entered the town in military triumph. They were received by the inhabitants with transports of joy. General Washington was hailed as their deliverer, and congratulated on the success of his arms by the public addresses of the Provincial Assembly, and the warmest acknowledgments of all those who now recovered the houses and possessions they had been obliged to abandon.

The confusion unavoidable in the hurry of a retreat, occasioned many valuable articles to be left behind. Among these were a considerable quantity of artillery and ammunition, especially at Bunker's Hill and Boston Neck. The distance of these places prevented their being brought off, and the shortness of time, their being rendered unserviceable. But the principal booty consisted in the immense variety of goods, especially woollens and linens, a supply of which the Provincial troops stood in the most

pressing need. The other articles of various kinds were also exceedingly numerous.

Having thus recovered their capital, one of the first acts of government exercised by the Provincial Assembly, was to order the effects and the estates of those who were fled with the British troops to Halifax, to be publicly dispersed of, and their produce applied to the use of the state. Such adherents to Britain as had risked to remain behind, were treated with great severity. They were prosecuted as enemies and betrayers of their country, and their estates were confiscated accordingly.

That object, however, which principally occupied the attention of the people of Massachusetts, was to put Boston into such a posture of defence, as might prevent its falling again into the power of Britain. To this intent, they applied with all diligence to the fortifying of it on every side. They employed, on this occasion, some foreign engineers that had been lately sent to America for such purposes. So eager were they in the prosecution of this business, that every able bodied man in the town, with very little distinction of rank, cheerfully co-operated in this work, and set apart two days in the week to complete it with the more speed.

The fact was, they were not a little apprehensive of the return of the British fleet and army, as soon as they were properly reinforced. What chiefly induced them to imagine that the designs upon Boston were not abandoned, was, that just before their departure, the British forces demolished the fortifications of castle William, which, by its situation, would have rendered it impracticable to attack the town by sea.

Nor was General Washington without anxiety about the destination of the fleet and forces that had left Boston. New York, by its position, lay quite exposed to the most sudden attack. He, therefore,

on the very day that Boston was evacuated, detached several of his best regiments for the defence of that city. Herein he doubtless acted with prudence; but the condition of the British army was not fit for an expedition of such importance. It did not amount to ten thousand effective men; and was by no means provided with due necessaries.

While the American arms were thus successful at Boston, they were busily occupied in the blockade of Quebec, where Colonel Arnold was exerting the utmost efforts under a multitude of discouragements. He found by experience, that he could place little dependence upon the adherence of the Canadians, who were easily dispirited by disappointments, and ready to quit him on the appearance of danger. The reinforcements promised by Congress, did not arrive expeditiously enough to second his operations. They had so many objects to occupy their attention, that it was with the utmost difficulty they could provide for them all, with tolerable sufficiency and dispatch.

The march of these reinforcements, which was in the midst of winter, was attended with prodigious hardships. They endured them with that fortitude and constancy, which at this time characterised the Americans: the fatigues undergone in the expeditions headed by Montgomery and Arnold, had filled them with an emulation which inspired them with equal confidence and perseverance.

General Carlton, though delivered from any immediate apprehensions from the enemy, still remained in a very disagreeable situation. His communication with the adjacent country being cut off, he was reduced to much distress for want of provisions. Whatever he procured was not without great danger and difficulty. The Provincials way-laid all parties that were sent out upon this intent, and encountered them with all imaginable ardour. They improved

improved every advantage, and kept the garrison in continual alarms. His vigilance was incessantly employed in guarding against the various endeavours of the Provincials to surprize him. They were indefatigable in contriving stratagems to this purpose, as they found that he was too well prepared to be overcome by open force.

They began, however, to be sensible, that unless they brought their designs to a speedy execution, it would soon become too late to continue them with any prospect of success. The season was now approaching when succours would arrive from England, and oblige them to act on the defensive. The siege therefore was recommenced in due form; batteries also were erected on the shores of the river St. Lawrence, against the shipping in the harbour, and attempts made to burn it by means of fire ships. Though unsuccessful, they displayed much courage and conduct in several of these enterprizes. While one of them was executing, they had prepared scaling ladders, and other implements to storm the town; and held themselves in readiness to escalade it, while the attention of the besieged was turned to the conflagration of the shipping. Though they failed in the main attempt, they succeeded in part: they burned a large number of houses in the suburbs; and the garrison was compelled to pull down the remainder, to prevent the fire from spreading.

While the Provincials were employed in this manner, numbers of the Canadian Noblesse assembled, and collected a large body of their countrymen, in order to raise the siege of their capital. They put themselves under the command of Mr. Beaujeu, a gentleman of bravery, and who was very desirous to signalize his attachment to government: but he was ill seconded: the Provincials met him on his march, and entirely defeated him.

Encouraged by this success, the Provincials continued the siege with redoubled ardour. But they met with no better success than before. They had now tried every expedient to reduce it : they had used bombs and red hot balls, after failing in their endeavours to carry it by assault ; and they were now convinced it was out of their power to attack it by regular approaches, as they had no artillery of weight enough for such an undertaking. This, added to the slowness with which reinforcements arrived, through the badness of roads, impediments of weather, and want of requisites, retarded their operations, and lessened the courage and vigour with which they had been at first prosecuted.

In the midst of these difficulties, the small pox, a distemper deemed peculiarly fatal on the continent of North America, broke out among them with great violence, and carried them off in numbers. The dread which this terrible disorder struck into the troops, operated like a pannick. The anxiety for self-preservation, overcame all other considerations. Multitudes fled from what they looked upon as certain death ; and it became impossible to carry on military duty with proper discipline and regularity.

While they were in this distressful situation, they were informed that succours were on their way from England, and would speedily arrive at Quebec. This, together with the calamity they were afflicted with, made it necessary for them to retire from the town, before their arrival ; not doubting, the moment they were landed, that Governor Carlton would immediately make a vigorous attack on the besiegers, who, in their present condition, he well knew, were unable to face such a force as he would then have under his command. But this design was prevented by the expeditiousness with which the squadron, sent to the relief of Quebec,

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made its way through the ice up the river St. Lawrence before such an attempt was thought practicable. The appearance of these ships threw the Provincials into great confusion : the communication was immediately cut off with that part of their forces which lay on the other side of the River ; and it was now too late to provide for the retreat they had meditated.

May 6th, As soon as the reinforcement was
1776. landed, together with the matines, and had joined the garrison, General Carlton put himself at their head, and sallied out upon the Provincials. He found them in the greatest disorder. As their camp was not intrenched, and they were already retreating, no resistance was made, and they fled on all sides with the utmost precipitation, leaving all their artillery and warlike stores. Their flight was so rapid, that they could not be overtaken, and the only prisoners were the sick and wounded. While the military were thus employed on shore, the lighter armed vessels proceeded up the River with the utmost diligence, and seized a number of vessels belonging to the enemy.

In this maner was raised the siege of Quebec, after a duration of five months, during which, the activity and courage of the garrison, the abilities and intrepidity of their commander, and the spirit and perseverance of the Provincials were all equally remarkable. This event gave the finishing blow to all the attempts and expectations that Congress had formed on this quarter ; and their troops from this time met with nothing here but defeats and disasters.

The success which awaited the British arms in this Province, was attended by a behaviour full of humanity. Many of the Provincials, through wounds and sickness, had not been able to accompany their main body in its retreat. They lay con-

cealed in the woods and scattered habitations about the neighbourhood, in a very distressed and deplorable condition. General Carlton generously issued a proclamation, ordering proper persons to seek them out, and give them all necessary relief at the public expence. To induce them not to refuse these compassionate offers, he further promised, that as soon as they were recovered, they should be at perfect liberty to return to their own homes.

Shortly after the repulse of the provincials, the forces expected from England arrived. The General now saw himself at the head of more than twelve thousand regulars, among whom were the troops of Brunswick. He directly hastened to Three Rivers, a place situated midway between Quebec and Montreal, and so called from its proximity to three branches of a large river that falls into the St. Lawrence. Here, it had been imagined, the provincials would have made a stand; but they had continued to retreat until they had reached the river Sorel, near one hundred and fifty miles from Quebec. They were met here by the reinforcements appointed for their assistance; but the whole of their force was considerably weakened by sickness and other calamities.

Notwithstanding these discouragements, a bold attempt was projected by their commanders for the surprize of the British troops at Three Rivers. A considerable body of these was posted at this place under the command of General Frazer. Another was near them on board the transports, under General Nesbit. The main body under Generals Carlton, Burgoyne, Phillips, and Reidesel, the German General, were stationed partly on shore, and partly on the River, in the way from Quebec. The provincials were encamped at the Sorel, about fifty miles distant from Three Rivers; and between them and this place, the river St. Lawrence was occupied

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by a number of armed vessels, and transports with troops.

But these obstacles did not dispirit them. Two thousand of their best men, headed by General Thompson, embarked at the Sorel, and fell down with the tide, keeping on the south side of the River, till they arrived at a place called Nicolet, opposite to Three Rivers. From thence, in the night, they passed to the other side, in order to surprize the body under General Frazer. Their intent was to attack him about break of day. They were in three divisions, one to act at each end of the town, and the remaining to support them, or to cover a retreat in case of need. But this they were determined not to think of till extreme necessity, compelled them, and they found that no other means remained to save them from utter destruction.

Unfortunately for their design, the time they took in crossing the river, was so long, that though 8th June, 1776. they passed the shipping unobserved, they were discovered at their landing. The alarm being thus given, General Frazer prepared to meet them. The difficult ground they were obliged to march over, threw them into disorder, and when they made their attack, they were received, contrary to their expectation, by men who were waiting for them, and who had not only the advantage of position, but of a number of field-pieces, which did great execution among them.

While they were making the most vigorous efforts to surmount these obstacles, they were apprized that General Nisbet, who commanded the troops on board the transports, had landed them; and was marching with all speed to fall upon their rear. A retreat was now their only resource. As General Nisbet lay in the way to their boats, they were obliged to make a large circuit through a deep swamp, pursued by both parties, who followed them

close on each side for some miles. They traversed it at last with excessive toil, and sheltered themselves in a wood that stood at the further end of it. Here the British troops ceased the pursuit. The Provincial commander was taken, with about two hundred of his men.

The strength of the British army in this Province was now such, that the Provincials lost all hopes of being able to face it. They demolished the works they had erected at the confluence of the Sorel into the river St. Lawrence, and carried off their artillery and stores. General Burgoyne landed here with a considerable detachment, in order to advance to Fort St. John, while the remainder of the fleet and army sailed up the river towards Montreal. They found this place abandoned by the Provincials.— After taking possession of it, the main-body set forwards to join General Burgoyne, against whom it was not doubted the Provincials would collect all their force, and make a resolute stand.

In expectation of such an event, he proceeded with great order and circumspection along the So, 18th June, rel; but on his arrival at St John's, he

1776. found, that after destroying all that could not be carried off, the Provincials had set fire to the place. They had done the same at Chamblee, and burned all the vessels and craft which were too heavy to drag up the rapid stream of some parts of this river. They made no stop, as it was thought they would have done, at Nut Island, at the entrance of Lake Champlain, but crossed it over immediately to Crown Point. This retreat was conducted with great care and prudence by General Sullivan.— Though constantly pursued, and often on the point of being surrounded by the numerous bodies that kept close upon him, yet he found means, by great vigilance and speed, to extricate himself from the many dangers to which he was continually exposed,

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from an active, an intrepid, and a superior enemy. His merit on this occasion was publicly acknowledged by the thanks of Congress.

Thus was a final end put to all hostilities in Canada. The Provincials lost in their expedition into this Province many of their best officers, and great numbers of their bravest soldiers. To say nothing of General Montgomery, the loss of whom was equal to that of an army, others of great, though inferior worth, were either slain or captured. In their retreat it was computed, that from the day when they broke up their camp before Quebec, to that of their arrival at Crown Point, their loss in killed, prisoners, and dead through wounds and illness, amounted to little less than a thousand men; of whom, besides those who fell, or were taken in the engagement near Three Rivers, and in various skirmishes, no less than four hundred fell at one time into the hands of the British troops at the Cedars, a place about fifty miles higher up than Montreal.

But if the Provincials were compelled to quit Canada on the one hand, the British army could not improve its successes on the other. The Lake Champlain lay between it and the former, who were entirely masters of its navigation, and had a number of armed vessels in readiness to impede its passage. It became therefore necessary to construct a sufficient number to secure it; but this required much time and labour. Six vessels, completely armed and equipped for this purpose, were arrived from England; but the falls at Chamblee rendered it impracticable to bring them up into the Lake. It now appeared absolutely indispensable to take them to pieces, and re-construct them, as well as many others, in order to gain possession of the Lake, and to transport the British forces to the other shore.

While these transactions were taking place in the northern parts of the American continent, the

southern Provinces were no less agitated. In North Carolina, Governor Martin, though obliged to fly for shelter on board a ship, was not the less determined to exert his activity in the cause for which he suffered. He had formed a project for the reduction of this Province to obedience, of which he was not the only person who had conceived very sanguine hopes.

There was at this time in North Carolina, a resolute and unruly class of men, known by the name of Regulators. They had long lived independent, in a manner, of all regular controul.— They had been considered as rebels by the King's Governors, and they were held in much the same light by the new government, to which they were remarkably averse. With these, and the emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland, who composed a considerable body, Governor Martin had formed a connection, by means of which he promised himself to reduce this Province to subjection. The courage and the fidelity of the Highlanders to the British cause, he was well assured of; and he was no less confident of the attachment of the Regulators, and of their great superiority in arms to the other inhabitants of the Province. They were an active and hardy race of men, used to continual motion, and from their manner of living, singularly expert in the handling of their fire-arms.— They were not a little dreaded by the residue of their countrymen, who from habits of indulgence and ease, did not incline to thwart them, as knowing from the daringness of their disposition, that they were not to be molested with impunity, and from their numbers that they would prove a dangerous and powerful enemy.

Commissions were sent to the heads of these people for the raising of several regiments. Colonel Macdonald, a brave and enterprizing officer, was appointed

appointed their General. By the Governor's direction, he erected the King's standard, and published a proclamation, by which all men were summoned on their allegiance to repair to it, Feb. 1776.

Exclusive of this force, which was considerable, and on the exertions of which he placed much reliance, the Governor's confidence was further increased by the intelligence that a powerful armament, and a large body of regular troops, were destined to act in the Carolinas, and were making the best of their way to his assistance.

But the Provincial Assembly were fully sensible of the danger of suffering a man of such activity and resolution as Governor Martin, to re-possess himself of the power of which they had deprived him. They collected, with all possible diligence, the whole strength of which they were masters, and in the mean time dispatched such force as was in readiness, to oppose the Royalists. It was commanded by General Moore, who with some cannon, took possession of a strong post near them, which he fortified. Here he was summoned by General Macdonald to join the Royal standard, under pain of being treated as an enemy. His answer was, that if they would subscribe an oath of fidelity to the Congress, and lay down their arms, they should meet with the usage of friends, and the rash proceedings of which they had been guilty should be forgiven. But if they persisted in an insurrection, which, from their want of sufficient strength to support it, they must be conscious would end unsuccessfully, they must expect the severest treatment.

The provincials were in a few days so powerfully reinforced, that they amounted to near eight thousand men. Such a superiority compelled the Royalists to provide for their safety by a precipitate retreat. Their want of artillery had prevented them from

from attacking the provincials in their trenches, while they had the advantage of numbers; and they now saw, when too late, the temerity of their undertaking. They consisted indeed of near two thousand men, but were unprovided with many necessaries. In this situation they trusted their intrepidity would make amends for deficiencies. They were by this time almost inclosed by the enemy; but by dint of resolution and dexterity, they disengaged themselves, and by forced marches through woods and difficult passes, they forced their way, the space of fourscore miles, and in spite of the enemy's continual efforts to intercept them, gained Moore's Creek, within sixteen miles of Wilmington, where they expected to be joined by Governor Martin and General Clinton, who was lately arrived with a confidetable detachment.

But this junction was effectually prevented by the provincials, who pursued his party so closely, that in order to avoid them, Colonel Macdonald judged it necessary to attempt the passage of the Creek, notwithstanding a body of the enemy lay on the other side, under Colonel Caswell, with works well lined with men, and provided with artillery. But the place where the attempt was made, not being fordable, the royalists were obliged to cross over a wooden bridge, of which the provincials, not having time to pull it down entirely, had taken up the planks. They had, however, by greasing the beams and remaining timbers, rendered them so slippery, and unsafe to tread upon, that on the Colonel's party advancing, they could not make good their footing any where. In this condition, they were

Feb. 27th, assailed on all sides by superior numbers,

1776. and totally defeated, after losing their bravest officers and men. Among those was Captain Macleod, with several other Highlanders, who fell gallantly with their broad-swords in their hands.

Their

Their General, and most of their leaders were taken prisoners, and the rest betook themselves to flight.

Had this insurrection succeeded in the manner proposed, it would have proved of essential service to the cause of government, by the junction of those numbers in the back settlements, who were waiting the arrival among them of the regular troops they had been promised. Nor would they have remained inactive on this occasion, had they not been deficient in arms, and especially in ammunition. But this failure put an end to the whole scheme, and dispirited the royalists from attempting any other. The provincials were now so thoroughly upon their guard, and so well prepared, that no further expectation was entertained of making any impression upon them. Their force appeared to be much more considerable than it had ever been imagined. They had, in the space of a fortnight, assembled near twelve thousand men, well armed and accoutered. Before the present troubles, they had stood in perpetual awe of the regulators; but necessity had taught them the use of arms; and the success they now met with, gave them a courage and confidence they had not felt before.

In Virginia the royalists, under Lord Dunmore, met with no less disappointments. The fleet on board of which they had taken refuge, continued to infest the rivers and the coasts of that Province; but as the shores were well guarded, no descent could be ventured, and no refreshments could be procured. This made their condition highly distressful. The excessive heat of the climate, added to the badness of the water, and want of wholesome provisions, and the perpetual confinement of such multitudes in small unroomy vessels, produced a pestilential fever among them; which proved extremely fatal, especially to the blacks. In this deplorable situation, they were driven from every road and creek

creek by their incensed countrymen. It was found at last indispensably necessary, in order to avoid perishing through want of food, to quit this fatal and inhospitable coast. After setting fire to the least valuable of their vessels; these unfortunate fugitives failed with about fifty remaining to them, some to Florida, others to Bermuda and the West India islands.

While the affairs of Congress prospered in this manner in North Carolina and Virginia, they were earnestly employed in forming a marine. In the beginning of march, they dispatched Commodore Hopkins, with a squadron of five frigates, to the Bahama islands. He landed on the principal one, called Providence, and brought off the ordnance and military stores ; but the powder, which was his chief object, had been conveyed away. In his re-

turn, he took several prizes, and fell in 1776. with the Glasgow frigate, commanded by Captain Tyrriingham Howe, in company with a tender : this latter was taken ; but the Glasgow made a resolute defence, and escaped, notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy.

It was hoped, however, at home, that the expedition that was now preparing against South Carolina, would compensate for the ill success that had attended the British affairs in the neighbouring Provinces. A squadron was fitted out at Portsmouth, which sailed from thence in December ; but met with such unfavourable weather, that it did not reach Cape Fear, in North Carolina, till the ensuing May. Here it was unhappily detained by a concurrence of accidents till the end of the month ; during which time the people at Charles Town had full leisure to make what further preparations they judged requisite, against the attack which they now plainly perceived was meditated against them.

The

The squadron which was commanded by Sir Peter Parker, consisted of two ships of fifty guns, four of thirty, and two of twenty, an armed schooner, and a bomb-ketch. The land forces were under Lord Cornwallis, and Generals Clinton and Vaughan. At the time they proceeded on this expedition, they had no intelligence of General Howe's motions. He had dispatched a vessel with instructions for their pursuing other measures than those they had in contemplation; but through a complication of difficulties and delays, she did not arrive at Cape Fear till the squadron had left it.

In the beginning of June, this squadron anchored off Charles Town Bar. It was necessary for the two largest ships to take out their guns, before they could cross it; and though lightened as much as practicable, they touched the ground, and were several times in danger of sticking fast.

The Commander in Chief of the Provincials upon this occasion, was General Lee. He had exerted himself with remarkable activity in putting New York in a state of defence against the attack which had been suspected from General Clinton. He had, with the same expedition, provided for the security of the coasts of Virginia, and of North Carolina; and was now employing himself with equal diligence for the protection of Charles Town.

After crossing the Bar, the next obstacle to be surmounted, was a fort on the south west point of Sullivan's island: it commanded the passage to Charles Town, which lay six miles further to the west. Though lately begun, and not completely finished, it was in a stronger state than represented to the British commanders; who knowing the force with which it would be attacked, and depending on the valour of their people, did not hesitate in resolving to assail it immediately.

To

To the eastward of Sullivan's, lies Long Island, separated from it by some shoals, and a creek, said to be fordable at low water, and not above two feet deep : opposite this ford, the provincials had posted a strong body with cannon and intrenchments. General Lee was encamped on the main land ; from which there was a communication to Sullivan's island, by a bridge of boats, over which he could throw succours at pleasure, to support the body of men posted there in order to obstruct the passage of the British troops.

The situation of these upon Long Island was extremely incommodious. It was a mere heap of sand, without tree or shelter of any kind, where they stood exposed to the burning heat of the sun in the hottest season of the year. The inconveniences which attended the fleet and army were indeed excessive. The water they drank was extremely brackish, and their provisions were both indifferent and scanty. Notwithstanding the great activity with which they laboured to forward their preparations, unexpected and unavoidable delays retarded the execution of many of the purposes necessary to complete them. Near a whole month was consumed in this manner, which afforded the enemy ample time to improve every advantage that could be suggested.

The twenty-eighth day of June, all things being in readiness, the bomb-ketch began the attack in the morning, by throwing shells at fort Sullivan. About mid-day, the two fifty gun ships, and two thirty gun frigates, came abreast of the fort, and began a severe cannonade. Three other frigates took their station between the island and Charles Town, with an intent to enfilade the batteries of the fort, and to cut off, at the same time, the communication of the island with the main land, thereby to prevent its receiving succours, and the garrison

rison from retreating. This position, too, would have obstructed any attempt from fire ships to interrupt the main attack. But these purposes were all frustrated by the ignorance of the pilot, who led the frigates into the shoals, where they all stuck fast. Two of them were, however, disentangled ; but they received so much damage, that they were unfit for the service proposed ; and the other was set on fire, that she might not fall into the hands of the enemy.

In the mean time, a heavy and incessant fire continued between the ships and the fort. The Provincials behaved on this occasion with a courage and coolness that astonished the British officers and seamen : the execution they did was dreadful.—Never was attack made with more intrepidity, nor defence with more deliberate valour. Those who had been in various encounters of this sort, concurred in declaring that they had never been witnesses of so resolute a resistance.

The Bristol having lost the springs upon her cable, which were shot away, lay some time terribly raked by the enemy's fire. They discharged a great quantity of red-hot balls, and set her twice in flames. The behaviour of Captain Morris, her commander, was extraordinary in every respect :—After receiving five wounds, he still remained upon deck, till obliged to quit it, in order to undergo the amputation of his arm ; after which he undauntedly returned to his station, and received two wounds more ; the last of which was from a red-hot ball, which took him in the belly, and put an end to his life.

Such was the slaughter on board the Bristol, that every officer and seaman upon her quarter-deck was either killed or wounded, excepting the Commodore, Sir Peter Parker, who stood alone unhurt, and conducted himself throughout the whole of this destruc-

destructive day with great intrepidity and presence of mind. Captain Scott, of the Experiment, behaved with no less bravery; and besides the loss of an arm, was otherwise so dangerously wounded, that his life was despaired of.

The execution from the British shipping was very considerable; but the works of the fort lay so low, that numbers of the shot flew over, and they were of such a nature, as to stand the weight of very heavy metal, without being easily demolished.— They were composed of palm-trees, and earth very thickly intermixed. During the height of the attack, the batteries of the fort remained so long silent, that the assailants concluded the fort had been abandoned: but this silence was only occasioned through want of powder; they had expended all their stock, and were obliged to wait for a fresh supply from the camp on the main-land.

It had been expected, that the troops posted on Long Island would have participated in the operations of this day, by fording over Sullivan Creek at low water, forcing the enemy's intrenchments, and marching up to the fort; but the depth of water proved much greater, upon trial, than had been imagined; the works thrown up by the enemy, were found, on a nearer approach, much stronger than they had at first appeared; their numbers and artillery far more formidable; and the position of General Lee such as to enable him to overpower with ease, any force that could have been brought to act against him.

This dreadful engagement lasted till darkness obliged the British squadron to give over. The tide of ebb was nearly at the lowest, and it was drawing towards ten, when the Commodore, having done all that skill and courage could prompt a brave officer to do upon such an occasion, thought proper to discontinue an action which no longer afforded any

possibility of success. From the time the engagement commenced, to that when the ships drew off, ten full hours were counted; a long space for so close and incessant a conflict!

The Bristol and the Experiment were so much damaged, that it was apprehended they could not be got over the bar. This, however, through great skill and labour, was accomplished, to the utter astonishment of the provincials, who had conceived it impracticable. The frigates suffered also considerably, though not proportionably to the large ships, at which the provincials principally directed their fire.

It had been hoped that the bomb-ketch, which carried a mortar of a peculiar construction, would have proved highly serviceable in annoying the enemy; but whether it proceeded from overcharging it, on account of the distance at which she was stationed, or some defect in the manner of fixing that engine, the bed that held it was in a short time so loosened, that it became of no use.

Great was the applause bestowed upon Colonel Moultrie, who commanded in Fort Sullivan, and to whose intrepid behaviour, the successful defence of it was in a very great measure owing. He was well seconded by his officers; and great gallantry, and even heroism, were displayed by some of the subalterns. A serjeant of grenadiers, named Jasper, seeing the flag-staff shot away, jumped from one of the embrasures upon the beach, took up the flag, fixed it on a sponge-staff, and amidst a storm of shot, remounted the merlon, and leisurely fixed it in its former place. For this uncommon act of bravery, he was publicly presented with a sword of value by the Provincial President, and was also promoted. Another serjeant, whose name was Macdonald, being mortally wounded by a cannon-ball, "I die," said he, in his last moments, "for a glorious

rious cause; but I hope it will not expire with me."—A sentiment not unworthy of the greatest characters mentioned in history.

The number of killed and wounded on board the British squadron, amounted to near two hundred. Those of the enemy could not be ascertained; but their loss must have been considerable, as most of the guns of the fort were dismounted, and fresh reinforcements poured in during the whole time of the engagement.

Uncommon spirit appeared on this occasion among all the people who accompanied this expedition. A number of volunteers offered themselves, and acted with great bravery. At the head of these was Lord William Campbell, Governor of South Carolina, whose courage prompted him to undertake the command of the lower-deck guns of the Bristol, a station of peculiar danger. Many of the seamen belonging to the ships of war, being unable, through illness, to attend their duty, the sailors on board the transports courageously supplied their places.

The behaviour of the Americans in this, and the various military transactions that had taken place since the commencement of hostilities, though it did not dismay, yet it highly surprized the British officers and soldiers employed against them.—Expecting from the general information they had received, that they were a people unapt for war, from the life of peace and plenty to which they had been used, they could not help expressing their astonishment at the proofs they were continually meeting how wrongly they had been informed.—The truth was, that notwithstanding the prosperity of their domestic circumstances, their habits were by no means effeminate; their dispositions, as already hinted, were remarkably active, and their occupations tended equally to invigorate their bodies,

dies, and sharpen their minds. But that, which of all other causes, was the most powerful and efficient in stimulating them to act with resolution, was that very insinuation of their want of courage and capacity for war. It proved a constant spur in all their enterprizes; they were continually reminded of it by their leaders; it filled them with resentment and indignation; and, together with the intimate persuasion of the justice of their cause, animated them effectually in supporting it.

C H A P. XX.

Declaration of Independence.

1776.

WHILE these various transactions were taking place in the different Provinces throughout America, the Congress was deeply engaged in the preparation of that event which began now to be universally expected.

A circular address was sent to every Colony, stating several reasons for which they judged it necessary that the authority of the Crown and Legislature of Great Britain should be totally suppressed, and the powers of government assumed respectively by the Assembly of each Province.

They founded the justice and propriety of this measure, on the conduct held by Great Britain during a long time past, but especially on the determinations contained in the prohibitory act lately passed, by which all intercourse was forbidden with the Thirteen United Colonies. An interdiction of this kind, was, in their opinion, a formal exclusion from that protection which the Crown owed to its subjects. They were, in fact, declared outlaws, and lay exposed to all people's mercy. They had nothing further to expect but ill usage and depredation; and they were by proclamation, given over to be plundered and despoiled of their property by all who could seize upon it. Such was, they said, the answer they had received to the dutiful and humble petition they had presented to the British throne, in the name of all the inhabitants of America, for a friendly redress.

dress of grievances, in order to a sincere and permanent reconciliation.

So determined and irrevocable was the resolution of Britain to establish an arbitrary government in the Colonies, that not content with levying numerous armies, and equipping powerful fleets at home for that purpose, she had applied to her foreign allies for the assistance of their troops, and was now preparing to invade the American continent with all the force her treasures could procure.

For these reasons, it was indispensably incumbent upon them to unite their arms and councils with the greatest vigour, unanimity, and speed. The danger was manifest and imminent; the exertions they had hitherto made, though considerable, must now be increased in a proportion with those of their enemies. As these had divested themselves of all manner of regard and feeling for the Americans, they were no longer bound to consider them as their founders and parents, and were in all reason, absolved from any farther allegiance to that monarchy and nation.

Englishmen, said they, are no longer governed by those maxims of equity and moderation, that led them to consider us as brethren. National pride, and criminal influence, have destroyed that integrity and benevolence with which they used to attend to our concerns. Administration, for a series of years, have been our declared enemies, and despotism is the system they have long designed for the Colonies. The question is now, whether we shall persevere in the resistance we have begun, or pusillanimously lay down those arms which we have hitherto employed with honour and success?

Such was the purport of the representations made by Congress and its adherents. They were the natural result of the impressions made upon them by the dread they felt at the vast preparations to reduce

them. They now imagined that ministry intended to realize their fears, and to compel them to the most servile submission.

Until this apprehension began to prevail, whatever might have been the secret views of individuals, the Colonists did not think themselves necessitated to carry their opposition any farther than to prevent the designs of ministry from taking place. They insisted on no more than the enjoyment of their ancient claims : a reconciliation on these terms was the utmost of their demands ; and they had not yet fostered the idea of tearing themselves asunder from a people from whom they derived their origin, and with whom a variety of powerful motives had long contributed to cement, and still continued to support their connection.

Those, who relying on the temper and circumstances of the times, had indulged themselves in the formation of another plan, and whose ideas went much farther than those of the generality, had not yet dared to unfold their minds. The public was not yet sufficiently irritated to countenance their notions, and to eradicate old habits of attachment.

But the news of what was transacting in Britain, excited an alarm of a different kind from any of the former. Complaints and anger at the behaviour of the Colonists, had been followed by threats, and afterwards by an attempt to compel them to obedience ; but still the quarrel remained confined to the subjects of Britain ; they were the sole parties concerned, and all hope was not yet extinguished of composing these unhappy dissensions without foreign interposition.

But when they saw the sphere of discord enlarged by the association of strangers to this domestic dispute, they began to be persuaded, that those who had accused the British ministry of entertaining the most sinister designs, were well founded. They were

were now convinced that slavery or destruction was the alternative intended for them in the councils of Britain.

This conviction shortly became general, and operated with prodigious effect : it expelled all the remaining sentiments of respect and regard for the parent state, and wrought a revolution in the minds of many, which paved the way for that which sometime after entirely changed the face of affairs on the northern continent of America.

Numerous were the publications on this occasion, tending to inflame the public against the measures of the British government. Many of them were composed with great art and energy ; but none was so much read, and had such diffusive influence, as that which appeared under the title of *Common Sense*.

It was in every respect a bold and animated performance: As it spoke the language and opinions of a large proportion of the people, it was received with vast applause, and recommended as a work replete with truth, and against which none but the partial and prejudiced would form any objections.

The reasonings and arguments contained in these various writings, filled all companies and conversations, and excited a spirit of inquiry and discussion into the rights of human nature, and society at large, such as had never been exceeded, if ever equalled, in any country in christendom.

The ingenuity and eloquence with which the advocates of America supported the cause of their country against the claims of Great Britain, were of a peculiar cast. They denoted men who had dived deep into the subject, and were determined to bring to light the fruit of their lucubrations, and to avail themselves of every plea, however it might prove out of the common track, or offend established opinions, or wound the pride of those who build

their authority on the weakness and credulity of mankind. All such restraints vanished before individuals, who from their situation, had nothing to apprehend from those of whom they were to invalidate the pretensions or to lessen the character. The more freely they spoke of crowns and scepters, the more they knew their maxims would be acceptable to a people, whose unpliant disposition could bear submission to no power but their own.

They were now, said they, involved in a contest of more importance than any that had agitated the world for many ages. The dispute was not between states contending for some towns or territories ; the destiny of an immense continent was at stake : the interests they were defending were those of whole nations yet to come : the decision of this dispute would reach many ages into futurity ; and their posterity, long after they were no more, would have ample cause either to respect or to despise their memory.

Years had revolved since peace and reconciliation had been the continual subject of their thoughts, their entreaties, and their endeavours : but they now were called upon to attend to other objects. The sword was drawn, blood had been shed ; there was no more room for friendly discussions. They had entered upon another scene, and must now act the part of men who had a new character to support.

There were people among them, who, casting their eyes on the long connection that had subsisted between Great Britain and her Colonies, imagined that its protection was necessary for their welfare ; but though while in their infancy it was of service, they were now matured into a nation, and wanted it no longer. It was become dangerous, as they that are able to protect, may think themselves intitled to rule.

The

The connection with Great Britain carried a splendid appearance; but how dearly must it be purchased? Her honour and her interests often led her to take part in those quarrels that were almost perpetual on the continent of Europe. Her enemies, of course, were no less those of America, and every disaster that befel her, must be participated by this continent.

The vicissitudes that time introduces into all human affairs, would certainly put a period at last to the sovereignty of Britain over America. The sooner it was done, the better for both: she would free herself from everlasting contentions, and from a precarious authority; and America would establish that form of government which suited her situation, and the inclinations of her inhabitants.

Nature could not intend that countries so distant from each other, should be subject to the same government. What an absurdity for men to sail three thousand miles in order to receive directions from strangers how to manage their domestic concerns? Was it not more rational, as well as more honourable, that the seat of government in a great nation, and extensive country, should be at home?

Was it not a meanness unsupportable to generous minds, to be soliciting, as favours, what they could demand as rights? To depend upon the will and capriciousness of a foreign ministry, for the settlement of business in which they had no interest, from the nature of things were little acquainted with, and could not therefore be competent to superintend?

Great Britain and America could no longer trust each other. The feud between them was of a deadly nature, and had destroyed all mutual confidence. They were become, in fact, two separate states; and their interests were wholly different. Where suspicion reigned, friendship could not subsist. Britain

tain had clearly shown, that she meant to rule without controul; and America had evidently made it appear, that she would not obey. Such being the determination on each side, what end could be answered by talking of any other method of reconciliation than a treaty of peace? This might take place in order to avoid effusion of blood; but a return to their former state of subordination to Great Britain, was a situation for which the Colonies were no longer calculated: they too much felt their own weight and importance: friends they might possibly become; but not subjects to Britain: nor could even this be expected, until she had recognized the justness of this requisition, and treated with them on the footing of equals.

A reconciliation with Great Britain on the terms of dependence, would involve America in continual scenes of domestic trouble and inconveniency. The jealousy of Britain would labour covertly to obstruct all improvements, and to stint the growth of her strength and prosperity. The Colonies, on the other hand, would not strive with less zeal to counteract such endeavours: these would necessarily produce hatred and mistrust in the Americans. They would of course express their resentment, and again betake themselves to resistance. What other remedy could they recur to? The negative right vested in the Crown, would be constantly exercised in opposing every beneficial scheme they proposed; their industry would be cramped at home, and disengaged abroad; and every impediment thrown in their way, that rivalship could suggest. Thus, to be reconciled with Britain on the old plan, would be to admit among them their most inveterate enemy, in quality of a friend and protector. The absurdity of such a conduct was so obvious, that it was surprising the British ministry should entertain

so

so contemptible an opinion of the Colonists, as to hope they might be prevailed upon to adopt it,

The prospect of the miseries resulting from such a condition, justified their determination never to submit to it. They had therefore the clearest right to take up arms in order to preserve themselves from so great a calamity. They were not the aggressors; they acted purely on the defensive: their claims were not injurious to society; they were modest and founded on simple reason; therefore they were just. The Colonies had now attained to that maturity of political growth and vigour, which entitled them to respect and consideration in the world. They claimed what was in consequence their lawful due, the rank and the rights of a nation. There were many states much inferior to them in power, wealth, and population, that enjoyed this prerogative; why should they be denied it?

It was the universal desire that they should be placed on the footing of a free state. They were far removed from the country from which their ancestors originated. The land they dwelt in furnished them with the necessaries of life in the greatest abundance, and with many staple commodities upon which to found an extensive and beneficial trade with every nation in Europe. So situated, no restraints but those of absolute coercion, would prevent them from making the most of the many advantages bestowed upon them by nature. But it was evident that Great Britain would find it very difficult to enforce a monopoly, were she able to retain them under subjection. The vast extent of coast she must guard with her cruisers, the immense tracts of land over which she must keep a perpetual watch, would, in spite of her vigilance, elude the regulations she might enact to preserve the commercial benefits of America entirely to herself. Other nations would come in for an ample share, and would,

would, whenever the Americans were desirous of an emancipation from the authority of Britain, assist them with all readiness in effecting it.

It was therefore no less the interest of other powers than their own, that they should withdraw themselves from a connection with which they had every reason to be highly dissatisfied, and which it was experimentally found, could not be continued without being productive of incessant altercation. This was itself a sufficient motive to engage them to put an end to it.

They had now gone deep into the contest; it had already cost them dear, and was not probably near an end. The wisest course they could pursue, was to extend it at once to a nobler object than that which gave it rise. This was merely to prevent Britain from ruling them oppressively; but were it not more advisable to take a final determination not to suffer Britain to rule them at all? If they could resist her oppression, they could also resist her power; the first depended on the last. It was a duty they owed to themselves, to attain, as soon as possible, a state of security from the grievances of which they had so much complained. If having it in their option to remove them for ever, they should consent to remain exposed to them, they would be guilty of an unpardonable folly. It would render a repetition of the provocations they had endured, highly probable; and would reduce them to the necessity of re-commencing anew, what they had now more than half completed,

America was no less worthy of holding a place among free and independent countries, than Britain herself. In extent it was far superior, nor less in the variety of its productions. The natives were the descendants of those resolute Englishmen who left their country in quest of a freedom, which they could not find at home; or of those industrious multitudes

titudes who had emigrated from other parts of Europe, to enjoy, in this happy region of liberty, that toleration of civil and religious sentiments, which they were denied in the land of their nativity.

Men of this description were the most respectable of all characters. It was to such that nations owed their felicity and grandeur. Activity and enterprisingness of disposition, were the most useful qualifications in a state. From such forefathers they were sprung; and the world bore them witness that they had not degenerated.

Superior to Britain in the advantages of soil, equal to it in the merit of its inhabitants, the only inferiority of America was in numbers. But that was a deficiency which time was remedying with a rapidity that astonished all those who beheld it. By fair and unexaggerated computations, the population of America was reckoned to double in less than thirty years. It amounted at the present to more than two millions of white people. What a fund was this for increase, when once delivered from all restraints, and left entirely to the full operation of their unincumbered exertions?

But what need was there to justify their endeavours to obtain freedom? It belonged to them of right. They had purchased it with their blood at Lexington, at Bunker's Hill, and at the many other places where they had been called upon to assert it, by those who would have denied them its possession.

America was now in its prime. It had attained that stage of political existence which is so emphatically, and no less truly stiled the youth of nations. Now, therefore, was the season to employ its energy and vigour in asserting all the pretensions it could form; in securing all its rights; in a word, in establishing its independence of all sovereignty abroad.

The

The Colonies abounded with strong, healthy, and laborious men, full of courage and resolution to maintain the claims and the honour of their country. They had motives to animate them in its defence, peculiar to themselves. They were possessors and freeholders of the land they occupied : they did not hold it by those precarious tenures that degrade the rural classes in Europe : they cultivated it for themselves : it was in every respect their own : the life they led kept them at a distance from effeminacy ; their bodies were robust, and their dispositions manly.

In the small space of time since the Americans had taken up arms, they had exhibited specimens of valour and ability that had surprized their enemies, and attracted the admiration of Europe. They had fully confuted those base aspersions that represented them as an unwarlike people, fit only for the occupations of peace, and unable to contend with such veterans as would be employed against them : but they had met these veterans more than once in the field, and had not belied the character they had assumed of being as ready to fight for their liberty, as the English themselves had been formerly ; though now meanly consenting to forge fetters for their American fellow subjects.

America need not despair of furnishing individuals equal to the arduous task of conducting their affairs in the field, having already produced men who had conducted their councils with so much prudence. It was in tempestuous times like the present, that men of genius came forwards, and displayed their talents to the world. Many an exalted character would have lain dormant, but for those revolutions that call forth and set in motion the abilities of mankind. The formation of statesmen and heroes was due chiefly to them. Active scenes were a signal for great and capacious minds to show themselves ;

selves : they naturally took their station in the midst of storms, to increase, to direct, or to allay them at pleasure. Nature gave birth to such men in all countries : but it was chiefly in seasons of trouble and confusion that they made their appearance ; such only were favourable to those who were born to fix the destiny of states and nations.

Without assuming more merit than was due to them, the Americans might challenge any people to exhibit, within the same proportion of time, a larger number of brave and resolute men, of enterprising commanders, of intrepid soldiers, than the Colonies had afforded in the few months the operations of the field had lasted. They had started up unexpected, and in a manner self-formed. But such had, in all ages, been the consequences of struggles for national freedom : all history showed it ; and they only trod in the footsteps of those patriotic champions of their country, who had preceded them in so many parts of the world ; whose examples had been so frequently cited and followed by others, as well as themselves ; and would always raise up imitators among those who had too much spirit to bear with oppression.

The union of America was founded on the strongest tie ; a common apprehension of great misfortunes threatened indiscriminately to all. This which in appearance was an object of terror, was in fact the most efficient cause of their security. It compelled them to be unanimous and faithful to each other. It was therefore the firnest basis on which to erect such a constitution, as would equally benefit and protect them. The season of danger was the most proper, as well as the most cogent for such a purpose : people then forgot their petty interests, and cordially joined for their public good. Too much safety unnerved those great passions on which the common welfare so much depended.—

Were

Were America arrived to that pitch of opulence and internal prosperity, which must, in the course of things, become her portion, it were much to be questioned, whether the same zeal and fortitude in opposing an enemy, the same disposition to encounter hardships and difficulties, and above all, whether the same unanimity would have been found among them, as now happily characterised the Americans. Such a situation would, with all its advantages, have also been attended with its concomitant flaws and deficiencies : corruption would have crept in together with excess of wealth ; pride would have created those odious distinctions that render one part of the community an object of slight and indifference to the other ; parties would, of course, have been more easily formed in favour of an enemy, whose maxims corresponded with the designs of the proud and the haughty ; disunion would have followed, with its constant attendants, debility and dispiritedness. Instead of the manly resistance that now did them so much honour, the Americans would either have tamely and passively submitted to whatever Britain had thought proper to prescribe ; or if some of them, less sunk in degeneracy than the rest, had erected the standard of liberty, and summoned their countrymen to the common defence of their interests, they would have been but feebly supported, and must quickly have yielded to the mean disposition of the times, and have conformed to the ideas and temper of the majority.

Such fortunately was not the case of America.— It was precisely in that situation which is most favourable for union and defence : it consisted of a number of detached parts, which necessity alone had united for their preservation ; they felt their respective weakness while in a separate state, but they were no less conscious of the strength that would accrue from their conjunction. Mutual feeling

ing and friendship grew from the ill treatment they had received, and the terrors they experienced from a common enemy.

In private life, no attachment was more lasting than that which arose from a participation of adversity. Men never forgot their reciprocal willingness to assist each other in the day of distress; they always remembered it with a peculiar complacency; and they who had been sincere friends on these trying occasions, never after would become, or remain long foes.

In the same manner, those alliances and associations between public bodies, which were the most solid and lasting, as well as prosperous, had been concluded between nations involved in one common peril and calamity. In remoter ages, the invasions of the Persians, by uniting the Grecian republics, had rendered them invincible. In later periods, the Cantons of Switzerland had emerged into freedom, by being forced to stand by each other in opposing the tyranny of their sovereigns; and the seven provinces composing the Dutch commonwealth, owed their liberty to the same cause.

These illustrious precedents stood before them like so many invitations to America, to make one more in the catalogue of nations delivered from oppression by their virtue and perseverance. It might with the strictest truth be added, that the case of those celebrated nations was far from being so favourable as their own. The two last had a multitude of obstacles to contend with, from the proximity of the enemy, and the perpetual facility with which he was able to renew his attacks, and to weary out their patience, had not experience proved it unconquerable.

To these examples others might be added, were it necessary. But these were sufficiently conspicuous and splendid to awaken the people of America.

to a just sense of their condition, and to the propriety of improving the advantages that lay before them. They were evident and manifold. It was now in their power to form at once a republic which would become at the instant of its formation, the most potent and respectable of any now existing.—No iniquitous plans would concur in its establishment; it would not be founded on bloodshed and conquest, but on the very reverse; the spirit of peace and unanimity. The mere willingness and consent of those who were to be concerned in forming it, were the only requisites wanting to give it immediate existence. It was therefore to be presumed, that with so noble a prospect before them, there would not be a dissentient voice heard against so beneficial and honourable a proposal.

Fortune seemed to have had this great work long in contemplation, and to have gradually prepared it by such ways and means as should render it infallible. It was now two centuries since she first laid the foundation of her plan. Small were the beginnings by which it made its first appearance; but even then, such as could look into futurity, foresaw and foretold the future destiny of this immense continent. Founded under the auspices of a great and mighty people, colony arose after colony, and settlements were spread in one continued range along its wide extended shores.

In the mean time, the seeds of that spirit which now animates America, were plentifully sown every where. They were brought from a soil where they more vigorously fructified than in any other. The sentiments, the dispositions, the government of the people of whom the first emigrators had made a part, accompanied them to this new world. They transmitted them whole and entire to their descendants, by whom they were faithfully conveyed to the present generation.

Thus

Thus every Colony, however it might differ from others in some peculiar modes and forms of polity, still concurred with each other in retaining the essentials of the English constitution : they knew its value, and prized it accordingly ; in such hands it suffered no contamination ; and in the various modifications through which it had passed, its features were clear and visible.

Hence a communion of ideas and inclinations was universally established among all the Colonies founded by Great Britain. They were constitutionally one and the same people, though divided by the boundaries that nature has thrown between the different parts of this extended region. Whatever therefore affected any one of them in this important respect, equally affected all. They had before them the lessons, and what was still stronger, the examples of the parent state, to guide and to authorise them in the observance of the maxims which its constitution so forcibly inculcated.

To the singular praise of the Americans, they had adhered to them with a fidelity which was not even found in the mother country. While a great proportion of its inhabitants was so infatuated by weak prejudices, as to embrace opinions contradictory to the very essence of this constitution, and even to assert them with their lives, America remained immovably attached to them, and became, in this instance, an example to Britain.

A people so framed, were not to be led out of their way by deception, nor to be driven out of it by fears. They stood on a ground of which they too well knew the solidity to abandon it. No other, they were conscious, would afford them equal security for the advantages they had so long enjoyed.—They had too much sense to expect the continuance of them in a change of situation, and were possessed of too much spirit to resign them upon demand.

When in the plenitude of conquest and glory, Britain began to cast an eye of pride and haughtiness on these distant dependencies, and to divest herself of that complacency with which she had hitherto treated them, America still waited with patience for a return of her benevolence. She did not avail herself of the improper behaviour of the parent state, to cast off a connection of which she was not bound to suffer the continuance, whenever it became oppressive. It was borne, however, ten long years, in the midst of insults and mortifications, on the one part, and of intreaties and remonstrances on the other. Pride, ambition, and avarice, were the motives that stimulated Britain in this unhappy trial of the temper of the Colonies. She had lately been used to see her enemies at her feet ; she had spread her triumphant banners, and extended her dominion through every quarter of the globe ; riches poured in upon her from all parts. But in the midst of this grandeur and prosperity, she forgot that America had stood by her in its acquisition. She seemed unwilling to admit her Colonies to a participation of her honours and emoluments, and determined to confine them to herself. She sought to abridge them of those benefits that resulted from their situation, and to deprive them of those rights that belonged equally to both, and without which no people can claim the title of British subjects, and can only be considered as the vassals of Britain.

But this was an appellation which the spirit of America would not brook. She had been taught to glory in the rank and privileges of Englishmen ; she would give up neither. She was resolved to assert them, and was conscious of her ability to do it. Britain was unfortunately of opinion, she wanted both the courage and the means requisite for that purpose ; and in that persuasion, continued those provo-

provocations, which roused at last the resentment of America to a degree that showed she was deficient in neither.

In an evil hour did Britain think meanly of these Colonies : but the day was come which fortune had long projected for their deliverance from a situation unworthy of the greatness and importance to which they had attained. They were duly sensible of the regard that was owing to them ; and had it been properly paid, never would have conceived the design of a separation. They bowed before the parent state with a respect and humility, which neither that, nor any other potentate will ever again experience. They besought Britain to recollect, that though they were her children, yet they were come to their full growth. They would assist her, they would bleed, they would die for her ;—but they would not be burthened with the yoke of servitude.

There is unhappily a propensity in human nature to overload those who are willing to bear. Long had the Colonies acquiesced in restrictions of various sorts, on every branch of their external commerce, and their internal trade. Accustomed to peaceable obedience from them, Britain imagined it would have no bounds. In that imprudent expectancy, she rashly transgressed all those of moderation, and invaded those privileges of which the possession had always been left entire to the Colonists, on which the very existence of their freedom depended, and which ought therefore to have remained untouched, while Britain meant to secure them by any other tie than that of thraldom.

Such a change of conduct on the one hand, naturally produced an alteration of behaviour on the other. The bonds of friendship once broken, enmity, as usual, increased apace ; but according to experience, was much greater in the aggressor than in the sufferer. America would willingly have been

reconciled; but the injury came from Britain, and she knew not how to forgive. She judged of the resentments of America by her own; and confiding in the superiority of her power, determined to crush an opponent whom she was afraid to trust.

Compelled to draw the sword in her defence, still America looked forward with an eye to reconciliation. But the arrogance of Britain demanded unconditional submission. Despairing of being able to soften the rigour of so unreasonable a demand, what measures were the Colonists to take, but such as the spirit and wisdom of those who had been in the same circumstances as themselves, pointed out as just and necessary?

But let not America repine at her fate; it was the happiest that could befall her. If she knew her own interest, she would rejoice at the opportunity and the right jointly given her by Britain, to dissolve a connection that must henceforth prove a source of perpetual embarrassment. The hour was come for the Colonies alone to be connected in government, and to form an exclusive sovereignty.

The strength of America, when collected, would equally astonish and daunt her enemy. Britain relied upon the dispersed situation of the people in her Colonies, and the small proportion of those who would take the field. She calculated the resources of America by the rule of European politics, and fondly believed that pacific occupations would prevent the Americans from affording sufficient numbers for the support of their cause. But herein the least attention to experience, and to the circumstances of the Colonists, would have undeceived her. There are cases wherin all men are soldiers: the defence of liberty and of property is the most interesting of these cases; it always has, and always will put arms into the hands of all those who can wield them.—There are also nations wherein men are sooner fitted for

for soldiers than in others; this is peculiarly the case of America; where greater multitudes spend their lives in the laborious business of clearing and cultivating the ground, than in any country whatever. But Britain was blinded by the impetuosity of her resentment, and bethought herself of nothing but instant revenge.

She now beheld, however, a union of force in America that began to alarm her. She had hastened a determination which would have lingered many a year, unless it had been thus forced into completion. She had brought America to that point, at which no option remained between servility and independence. Could she flatter herself that the Americans would hesitate about the choice?

Now therefore was the auspicious moment to carry the system of their government to perfection. With all its excellencies, it would admit of many others. Fond of their constitution as the English were, it had involved them in many terrible disputes. This proved its imperfection, and showed that some radical deficiency lurked at bottom, which unless eradicated, would always be productive of evils, which might be palliated, but never thoroughly cured.

To what were due the civil wars that deluged England with blood in the last century? Whence arose those intestine feuds, that filled it with heartburnings and animosities, after the restoration of Royalty? What causes had brought about the Revolution? What was it, that in spite of these terrible remedies, still continued to afflict the constitution of England, and to render its boasted eminence highly problematic?

These were questions which they forebore to answer, lest they should seem to assume the province of dictators to the rest of mankind. But they were masters at home; and without meaning to offend the

sovereigns of the world, they would venture to lodge the supremacy of the state in those from whom it proceeded. The people of America, after so many examples of the inconveniences England had suffered under its present form of government, would now make trial of another.

The situation of America was particularly fortunate in this respect: she could chuse that model which appeared most eligible, without exciting any civil strife; and she lay too far off, in case of an erroneous choice, to be exposed to the interference of ambitious neighbours. All she had to guard against, was domestic dissentions. But there were no individuals among them possessed of riches and influence enough to disturb the peace of society on their own private account; the only danger they had to apprehend, was from an union among the principal families. But even this was a very remote apprehension; there was so general an equality in the fortunes and circumstances of most men, and such a levelling disposition among all, that it would be an impracticable attempt in any set of men, much more in a single individual, to aspire at exclusive power.

A government suited to the disposition and wishes of the Americans, seemed, in the universal opinion, to be very attainable. Ambition was a vice foreign to their character; the desire of domineering had never appeared in the most opulent and considerable among them; a kind and friendly behaviour to each other, marked all denominations of people, and placed them on a footing of neighbourliness, that peculiarly distinguished them from all others.

To men of this description, a government that would set their rulers at a great height above them, must prove highly unacceptable. Such a system would please them best in which laws would be respected more than individuals, and wherein all distinctions

tinctions would be avoided that were not evidently and indispensably necessary. It was therefore their duty to frame a constitution corresponding with inclinations of this kind, which were well known to be uppermost in the generality.

Few nations, if any, had, like the Americans, been favoured with so desirable an opportunity of constructing a government entirely to their liking. Force, and the pressure of circumstances, had decided the fortune of most nations in this respect.—How careful, therefore, ought they to be in seizing this critical opportunity, while nothing obstructed them, while their enemies were unable to prevent it, and while themselves were unanimous in their endeavours to obtain it.

Were they to delay so salutary a work, difficulties might arise, of which they had at present no conception. The enemy they had to encounter would undoubtedly assail them with every weapon of which he was possessed. One he had of universal power; that was his gold. If arms were to fail him, still he had that resource. Before he tried it, he would employ the other. This was the interval to come to a resolution among them to settle their affairs on so firm a foundation, as to frustrate all his attempts to overcome them by the temptation of lucre, which was in truth the only one they had to fear.

In order to effect this purpose beyond all danger of a defeat, nothing now remained to do, but to confirm all they had already done, and resolve to abide by all the determinations they had taken. These were the best preparations they could have made for the great business that was next to be transacted.

This business, great and important as it was, might be accomplished with the greatest facility. It consisted in no more than a declaration of independence. In doing this, they did no more than assert

assert the plainest truth. Of whom were they dependant at this day, but Providence and their own strength and courage.

But though this measure was attended with no difficulty, contrary to those things that were easily obtained, it would be productive of a multitude of benefits. It corresponded with the wishes of an incomparable majority, if indeed the diminutive proportion of such as might disapprove of it, deserved even a mention. It lifted America to the rank of a sovereign state; and impressed foreign nations with a respect much greater than that which they would, or were inclined to pay them, while they continued to acknowledge the sovereignty of Britain. Such an acknowledgment entitled her, in some measure, to call them rebellious subjects; but when they had cast off their allegiance, they would speedily meet with those who would recognize their independency. Even the very act of claiming it, would give them a consideration, which is never refused to a brave and magnanimous people. It would procure them a respectful treatment even among those whom the dread of disobliging Britain kept in awe; and among such as were known to be inimical to her, it would secure every favour that could be granted to them, without coming to an open rupture with the British Court.

A measure that came accompanied with so many advantages, ought not to be delayed. To waver and hesitate was the readiest method to awaken the vigilance of the enemy, and to excite him to counteract it. No uncertainty should be allowed to take place in such a case; to resolve and to execute should be the same deed; the enemy ought to be apprized of both at once: he then would be convinced of the inutility of striving to divide them; and, together with this conviction, would feel a diminution

diminution of the influence of which he deemed himself possessed.

To some this might seem an hazardous enter-
prise, full of danger, and tending to exasperate an
enemy equally vindictive and formidable, and whose
resources were an object no less of notoriety than
amazement. He would exert them unquestionably
to the utmost on so urgent an occasion; and they
might at length be found of superior weight in the
scale of comparison with theirs.

To those who argued in this manner, no other an-
swer could be given, than that in all emergencies of a
similar nature to the present, to require an absence of
all peril, betrayed imbecility of mind and weakness of
heart in the extreme. When was so great an object
as that proposed, ever compassed without difficulty
and danger? Allowing both to be ever so pressing
and imminent, still it were more imprudent and rash
to fly from, than to face them: they would pursue
and overtake the cowardly; the brave only stood a
chance to overcome them. It was wiser, therefore,
at all events, to embrace resolute measures: the
more daring they appeared, the safer they were in
reality: none but such could possibly procure suc-
cess; all others led to certain destruction.

But the hazards at which some people were so ter-
rified, were imaginary. Britain had already sum-
moned her utmost strength to this contest. What-
ever further steps the Colonies might take to oppose
or to irritate her, would not produce more effectual
efforts against them, than those she had made: they
would indeed show the inflexible resolution in those
who governed the American councils; to resist her
endeavours to the very last: but she could not too
soon be apprized of this intention; it might incline
her to ponder on the ruinous expence attending the
reduction of a people thus resolved, the great un-
certainty of succeeding in such an enterprize, and they

the dangers of various kinds, to which, in the mean time, she would lie inevitably exposed.

America had much more to apprehend from her internal foes, than her open enemies : of these she knew the strength, and could observe the motions ; but the others under the mask of friendship, concealed the basest treachery : they made it their business to dishearten people, by exaggerated informations of the numerousness of the forces that were to be employed by Great Britain against the Colonies : they were continually extolling their valour, expertness, and discipline ; recounting their exploits, insinuating, in short, that they would prove irresistible.

But who were these formidable troops against whom Americans would not be able to stand ? They had already withstood the bravest men in Britain. Was the pride of Englishmen so lowered, as to acknowledge any men braver than themselves ? Were the Hessians, or other Germans in British pay, better soldiers than the natives of Britain ? Were they more active and intrepid ? Were they more zealous for the honour of their country ? In a word, were they more completely qualified to wage war on the continent of America ? Certainly not. The advantages, on the contrary, were on the side of the English, in a variety of considerations. They fought in their own cause, were acquainted with the people and country of America ; spoke their language ; knew their sentiments ; they had more vivacity in their disposition, and would act with more expeditionness. But were the British troops ever so superior to the German, as they had not overcome the Americans, it was necessary for such as aimed at intimidating these, to represent the Germans as much preferable to them in point of soldiership,

If such excellent troops as the British had not succeeded against the Colonists, little had they to apprehend

apprehend from mercenaries, who came much more unwillingly to this distant scene of action, than the English themselves. These, it was well known, expressed reluctance enough to the service they were upon. Numbers, if not the far greater majority, disapproved of the quarrel they were engaged in, but were professionally compelled to support it.

While America was true to herself, she would maintain her ground against all her adversaries. Those who betrayed her, were an inconsiderable number; and to be apprehended only on account of their malice and inveteracy. But if she had a few traitors at home, she had on the other hand such numerous and powerful friends abroad, as would not fail to strike a damp upon their enemies, when they beheld who they were, and with what a force they intended to support the cause of America.

Did Britain imagine that she would be left unmolested, to proceed at her leisure and discretion against the Colonies? It was indeed the interest of the many secret ill wishers who surrounded her on every side, that she should indulge herself in this persuasion: they would compliment her with the fairest assurances of good will, and pacific intentions, till she had wasted her strength, and exhausted her finances: but the moment they saw her sufficiently debilitated, they would come forth and avow their purposes; and employ such a strength in their execution, as Britain would not, in her enfeebled condition, be able to oppose.

Nor would the Colonies in the mean time be left unassisted. Such a relinquishment would ill agree with the settled system of European politics. They would be supported by indirect and clandestine means from various quarters: these would fully enable them to keep the field, and weary out the enemy. It were needless to enumerate those parts of the world from whence help would come. It might

might reasonably be expected from every nation and potentate, to whom the greatness of Britain was an object of envy. Among these were some of the most powerful states in Europe. The maritime powers, in particular, would not certainly neglect so favourable an opportunity to deprive her of that naval superiority of which they stood in so much dread.

These were powerful motives to induce the people of America to go on cheerfully with the work they had begun ; and to hope for a prosperous issue. To these might be added the certainty of being abundantly supplied at home with able hands to perform it. It was not only in the bravery of its inhabitants, and their aptitude for war, that America had reason to place the highest confidence ; their numbers were an object no less interesting : the country was full of people, not only willing, but eager to act in the common defence. A specimen of their readiness was given the very first moment it was required : within a few hours notice, upwards of twenty thousand assembled on the memorable day of Lexington.

They were not multitudes hastily gathered, and as easily dispersed : they were men sincerely animated with the love of their country, and earnestly desirous to signalize themselves in its cause. It was not from the necessity of procuring a livelihood, that they embraced the profession of a soldier ; they ventured their lives freely and cheerfully for the protection of all that was dear to mankind : they left comfortable homes, the seats of plenty and content, and submitted to the hardships and distresses of a military life, from a far nobler prospect than that of pay and plunder : these they left to their enemies, whose chief inducements they must necessarily be, from the character of those individuals of whom their troops were composed ; men picked up wherever they could be found, depressed with indi-

gence, corrupted through sloth, or immersed in all kind of iniquity. Such were the recruits on which Britain was to depend for the supply of those armies that were to conquer America.

But experience had shown that such men were not to be placed in competition with those who fought in reality, for what most nearly interested them. King and country were words of course, employed in all monarchies for want of something more substantial and significant : but what were king and country to individuals, who, from their situation in life, could feel for neither ; who, for an increase of wages, would abandon their party, and act against it without the least remorse ?

Add to these considerations, that most of those whom they were to encounter, were new levies like themselves : the troops expected from Great Britain and Ireland, were in fact inferior to them ; by far the major part had never seen service, and numbers were fresh from the plough, the loom, and the shop ; their equals in condition at best ; though certainly not provided with such cogent reasons as those which ought to inspirit the Americans to acquit themselves manfully in the approaching trial.

With so many inducements to look forward with the brightest expectations, it would be unworthy of men contending for their all, to suffer one moment's despondency. The part they were acting had raised them to a station of conspicuity that attracted the eyes of the whole world. Europe had fixed its entire attention on the transactions upon this continent, and waited with continual anxiety for the arrival of intelligence, what progress the Colonists were making. They had the wishes of all the brave, the learned, and the wise, in that most enlightened region of the globe. It behoved them to preserve that esteem and predilection. The unanimity with which it was bestowed, was a proof they were

were not undeserving of it. They were precisely in the same position the valiant, though unfortunate Corsicans had been a few years before ; praised and admired by all nations. There was indeed an essential difference in their own favour ; the Corsicans were, from a concatenation of unhappy circumstances, abandoned and left singly to struggle ineffectually against the heavy weight that crushed them at last. But they stood, as it were, in the midst of every kind of encouragement and assistance. Their own strength was great and respectable ; that of their friends still more considerable. While Britain, their only enemy, had not a single ally deserving of the name. They who adhered to her, were needy and mercenary hirelings, of no consideration in the system of European affairs. They lent their troops to Britain, from the same motive they would lend them to any other power, pay and subsidy. They would withdraw them from the service of Britain, and devote them to another, to its enemies if required, for a larger stipend.

From these premises it was incontestable, that no people engaged in dispute with another, could possibly stand on more advantageous ground than the Americans. No discouraging circumstances could be pointed out to alarm them : the prospect on every side was clear and open : they had none but the common dangers of war to provide against ; and they were duly prepared for them ; but they had at the same time every reason to promise themselves a prosperous termination of it, and the completest success in the attainment of that object for which it was undertaken.

Such was the substance of the divers publications and opinions of people in America at this time. The communication of these sentiments, propagated them with amazing speed, among the multitudes whom the fermentation of the times had prepared

pared for their reception. They spread with irresistible rapidity throughout the continent; and gained so powerful a majority of profelytes, that those who intended to realize the speculations they contained, were convinced they should meet with no impediments, and would carry their schemes into the completest execution.

A declaration of independency now became the subject of universal discussion. It was mentioned as a necessary and indispensable measure: those who ventured to oppose it, those even who appeared doubtful of its expediency, were looked upon with a suspicious eye. No true American, it was said, ought to hesitate in giving it his hearty concurrence: a denial could only proceed from ignorance or falseheartedness; those who were ignorant of the true interest of their country, deserved no attention; and those who were false to it, merited punishment.

Notwithstanding the violence of those who supported this measure, and the superiority of their numbers, two respectable Colonies had the courage to oppose them. These were Pennsylvania and Maryland. A great proportion of their inhabitants professed a moderation of sentiments, that did not coincide with that impetuous zeal, so common and prevalent in the others. They were no less attached to their country; but did not approve of that outrageous warmth, which bore down all coolness and reflexion, and precipitated all measures without sufficiently pondering upon their consequences.

The establishment of a new form of government, was a matter of too serious a nature, to meet with their immediate concurrence, especially when accompanied with a total separation from the parent state. This, in particular, was strongly disapproved by a plurality of the Deputies to the General Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania. Though not less

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inclined than the others to insist upon a redress of the grievances, so often complained of, still they could not prevail upon themselves to unite with those who had resolved to put an end to these complaints; by settling all domestic affairs on such a plan as should take them for ever out of the hands of Great Britain, and exclude it from all interference and authority over the Colonies.

To this idea the most impetuous and turbulent adhered with inflexible resolution. The partizans of the opposite one, though numerous, being less warm, did not espouse it with equal vehemence and activity. They stood in no little awe of their antagonists, who represented them as deficient in attachment to the public, and as pusillanimous and wavering. They considered, at the same time, the necessity of remaining united with the other Colonies: reciprocal assistance was the only sure method of protecting them from the resentment of Britain; and to dissolve their union, would lay them in a manner at her feet.

In this dilemma, after maturely weighing the result of consenting to an accommodation with Great Britain, or of going the lengths proposed by the other Colonies, they found the decision either way so perplexing, that they determined to refer it to their constituents. They looked upon it as a question, wherein the community was too deeply involved; for any but themselves finally and personally to decide.

This important question was agitated with great fervour on both sides. It was argued that a separation from Britain would be followed by a multiplicity of inconveniences. They lost their old friend and protector, united to them by consanguinity and interest, who, with all his faults, had been a solid benefactor; and, grown wise by disagreeable experience, would give them henceforward no cause

of

of dissatisfaction. He was the sole umpire, in whose hands they could trust the power of holding the balance among them. He was the common parent of all, and would not behave with partiality to any. Such a moderator was absolutely requisite for the preservation of their internal peace, and the settlement of those differences which so often arose among them, to the serious disquietude of such as foresaw the dangerous consequences they would probably produce, when the Colonies were increased in strength, and might from this consideration, become untractable in their reciprocal disputes, and incline to use forcible methods of terminating them.

There were also various other advantages in a connection with Britain. Its power secured them respect every where; and their commerce, though subject to a few restrictions, was nearly equal to their means of exercising it: they had almost as much as they could manage; and it was always sure, in case of need, of being essentially assisted by the bounties so frequently and so generously bestowed upon those branches that required encouragement.

Precipitation in a case of so delicate a nature as an entire scission and dismemberment from the main-body of so noble an empire as that of Britain, would be unpardonable in men who had so long and so largely experienced the benefits of an union therewith. Novelty had its charms in public, as well as in private affairs: but, as to quarrel and part with an intimate was justly reckoned a misfortune, it might with no less truth be deemed a serious calamity, for two branches of a nation to come to such a rupture as to renounce each other for ever.

The reasonings on the other side were conducted upon a different ground. Little notice was taken of the foregoing assertions. They were held as precarious and founded upon no certainty, Liberty, it

was said, was the only basis on which they could build with any stability; without it no advantages could be depended on; and they must trust to the discretion and caprice of others, which was a state intolerable to men of spirit.

An accommodation with Great Britain was impracticable:—Her terms were too imperious for the Colonists to submit to while they were able to withstand her. What real friend to America would propose to lay down their arms in presence of such a force as was coming to invade the liberties of this continent? If they expected any terms fit for freemen to accede to, they must treat with arms in their hands: the moment they parted with them, all was lost.

Would any one, therefore, seriously advise them to consent to such a treaty as would necessarily deliver them up, naked and defenceless, into the hands of an haughty and arrogant enemy, whose will and pleasure they must implicitly obey, on pain of what chastisement he should think proper to inflict?—Perish the thought! and perish the man who should dare to avow it!

The seas between Great Britain and America were now covered with ships of war, and with transports filled with British troops, and with mercenaries hired for the purpose of subduing or of ravaging this continent. What should this intelligence produce in men of sense and courage, but an unanimous determination to stand by each other with fidelity and resolution in their common defence, and by no means to trust to the clemency of an enemy that offered no conditions?

An enemy that required them to lay down their arms, could mean them no good, and was not therefore to be trusted. But to what intent had they taken up these arms, if they were thus tamely to be surrendered? Did not America, with one universal

versal accord, firmly agree never to sheath the sword till its freedom was perfectly secured?—Was this the manner so sacred an engagement was to be performed? What a contemptible figure would they make in the eyes of all nations, and especially of their enemies, if after so solemn and deliberate a compact, they should meanly recede from it, on the bare rumour of the enemy's approach, without even having dared to risk a single trial of spirit and skill with him?

Whence could proceed so unaccountable a dread of an enemy not more formidable than him they had already encountered, and found themselves able to resist? His numbers were indeed increased, but theirs were not diminished; and their capacity to face him was augmented by the experience of a long and severe campaign, during which they had acquired a sufficiency of knowledge to discover, that mere discipline is not the only requisite to secure success in war.

It was clear, therefore, that no safety could accrue to them from any other measure than resistance. It had hitherto answered their intentions more fully than most of them had expected. It was reasonable then to hope, that by persevering in the same track, they would continue to prosper in the same manner, and would bring the enemy to treat them with less haughtiness.

But if they meant to resist effectually, they must adopt another system than that which they now pursued. It was involved in doubt and obscurity.—They were opposing Great Britain with all their might, and they still acknowledged themselves her subjects. Was this consistent with the end they proposed, which was an entire redress of all grievances, and a perfect enjoyment of liberty? How could either be obtained, while Britain refused even to make the smallest concession, and America still remained

mained in her allegiance? Was it not perceptible that such a situation tended to throw their affairs into confusion, and to weaken that spirit which held them together? Their resolution arose from their unanimity; but this would not last, unless people knew the ground they stood upon.

They acted at present on no fixed principle; they had chosen rulers, and had agreed to abide by their directions; but both they and their rulers professed a dependence on a superior, whose authority however they would not submit to. Such a conflict of power on the one hand, and of undenied claims on the other, would certainly, while these lasted, confuse the minds of men, and render them wavering and undetermined on which side of the question to range themselves.

In such a state of indecision America could not remain with safety. It would perplex her councils, unhinge her plans, and break her spirit. She had assumed sovereignty, and was fearful to avow it.— This was, in some measure, confessing herself either incapable or unworthy of it. People would not fail to be of this opinion. If she continued in this fluctuating situation, her officers and generals would abate of their deference and respect, her soldiers of their zeal and confidence, and all the community of its attachment to the cause in contention: such would inevitably be the consequences of it at home; while those Princes and States abroad, that had formed ideas of connection with them, would abandon all thoughts of that tendency, and resign them to the calamities that must ensue from the adoption of so weak and heartless a conduct.

Scrupulous and feeble minds were apt to startle at the proposal of casting off all obedience to the parent state; but these should be told, that where protection is refused, obedience is no longer due;

and

and that where oppression is exercised, resistance is no rebellion.

Britain began the contest, not America : this latter proffered the terms of reconciliation on which she would consent to remain united as heretofore ; the former refused to accept of them. Who was now to decide between two people, each of whom insisted upon the propriety and justice of their demands.

In cases of this nature, it behoved men to proceed with great deliberation in giving a verdict for either of the parties. Much more might be said however in favour of America, than of Great Britain. True it was, they were both equally determined to support their pretensions by force of arms. But here it ought to be considered, that the first acted on the defensive. This alone was a plea of sufficient weight to authorise her having recourse to such a measure : but the second had nothing to plead in justification of so terrible a method of enforcing her claims, but the persuasion that they were justly founded, which was the very point in litigation.

Here then was Great Britain asserting from the other extremity of the globe, her jurisdiction over America, and threatening ruin and extermination, in case her claims were not recognised in their fullest extent. Here stood America, in anxious suspense how to act, willing to avert the evils denounced against her by every reasonable concession, and yet utterly averse to yield to terms of dishonour and humiliation.

In this perilous situation, the question was, whether America thought herself possessed of sufficient strength to resist the force that Britain was sending to execute her menaces ; and if such were her persuasion, what were the properst means to render that strength most effectual ?

The right of self-defence was clear; the manner of conducting it was therefore to be adapted to the end proposed. Now it was evident, by the reasonings which had been adduced, that the end would never be attained, unless a total alteration took place in the maxims and objects of their politics.— While their measures were made subservient to the idea of re-union with Great Britain, the strength of America would never be put forth with due vigour; and it was much to be apprehended the contest would have an unfavourable issue. Why then should they delay the only measure that could bring them out of it with credit, and secure to them those advantages, to obtain which so much blood would be spilt in vain, unless they resolved to embrace it?

This indispensable, this only measure to save them from destruction, was to dissolve the union with Britain, and to declare America a free and independent State. By such a declaration, a change would be effected in the minds of men, that would instantly give an entire turn to the face of their affairs. The people would assume such ideas of their importance and rank in the political world, as would stimulate them to greater exertions than ever. Individuals employed in the service of the state, would conceive higher notions of those who were at the head of public affairs, and would obey their commanders with more diligence and alacrity. The commanders would look upon themselves as invested with powers derived from supreme authority, and would exercise them with more firmness and decision. There would be no pretence for hesitation and doubt in the execution of orders; obedience would be properly enforced, and acquiescence in all classes would become an obligation. These, and many other advantages, would result from such a measure at home, while abroad they would command an attention to
their

their proceedings, and a willingness to hearken to any proposals for a connection with them.

If any people felt a repugnance to such a measure, let them reflect, that herein America did no more than imitate Britain. She had cast the Colonies out of her protection; what was this but an abdication of all government over them? Abandoned in this manner, were they not authorised to look to their own safety? Were they not bound by the first of all duties, to provide for the welfare and preservation of that community which they composed?

Such were the arguments alledged on both sides of this important question. That which inclined to independency, carried it by a strong majority. It was determined by the people at large, that their Delegates should abide by the decision of Congress.

In the Province of Maryland, there was no less an opposition to independency than in Pennsylvania. Out of eleven counties, seven directed their Deputies in Congress to vote against it. They obeyed accordingly, and quitted that assembly. But such was the general resentment and indignation of the other Colonies, that the people of Maryland seriously reflecting on the danger of being disunited from those who surrounded them on every side, and who began already to mix threats with their reproaches, judged it necessary to alter their conduct. They commissioned their Deputies to return to the Congress, and to coincide with any measure which they might deem expedient. Thus authorised, they resumed their seats, and gave their consent to that long expected determination.

The fourth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, was the memorable day on which the Thirteen United Colonies declared themselves FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, and abjured their allegiance to the Crown and sovereignty of Great Britain.

The

The Manifesto they published in vindication of this measure, contained a very circumstantial enumeration of the causes and reasons that induced them to take it; and exhibited at the same time a strong representation of the temper, ideas, and maxims, that were uppermost among those who influenced the affairs of America at that period.

" When in the course of human events," said they, " it becomes necessary for one people to dis-
" solve the political bands which have connected
" them with another, and to assume among the
" powers of the earth, the separate and equal
" station to which the laws of Nature, and Na-
" ture's God entitle them, a decent respect to the
" opinions of mankind, requires that they should
" declare the causes which impel them to a sepa-
" ration.

" We hold these truths to be self-evident, that
" all men are created equal; that they are endow-
" ed by their Creator with certain unalienable
" rights; that among these are life, liberty, and
" the pursuit of happiness: that to secure these
" rights, governments are instituted among men,
" deriving their just powers from the consent of the
" governed; and whenever any form of government
" becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right
" of the people to alter, or to abolish it, and to in-
" stitute a new government, laying its foundation
" on such principles, and organising its powers in
" such form, as to them shall seem most likely to
" effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, in-
" deed, will dictate, that governments long estab-
" lished should not be changed for light and tran-
" sient causes; and accordingly all experience has
" shown, that mankind are more disposed to suf-
" fer, while evils are sufferable, than to right them-
" selves by abolishing the forms to which they are
" accustomed. But when a long train of abuses
" and

" and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same
" object, evinces a design to reduce them under
" absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their
" duty to throw off such government, and to pro-
" vide new guards for their future security. Such
" has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies ;
" and such is now the necessity which constrains
" them to alter their former systems of govern-
" ment."

The Declaration next proceeds to represent the treatment of the Colonies to have been a series of "injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny."

It then entered into a specification of grievances, and complained that assent had been refused to laws necessary for the public good.

Governors had been forbidden to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation, till assented to in Britain ; and that when suspended in this manner, no attention had been paid to them.

Assent had been refused to other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the rights of representation in the legislature.

Legislative bodies had been called together at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with ministerial measures.

Houses of Representatives had been dissolved repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness invasions on the rights of the people.

It had for a long time after such dissolution, been refused to permit others to be elected ; whereby the legislative powers, being incapable of annihilation, had returned to the people at large for their exercise ; the state remaining in the mean time exposed

posed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

Endeavours had been made to prevent the population of the Colonies, by obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migration thither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of land.

The administration of justice had been obstructed by the refusing of assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

Judges had been made dependent on the crown for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

A multitude of new offices had been erected, and swarms of officers sent to America to harass the people.

Standing armies had been kept among them in times of peace, without consent of their legislatures.

The military had been rendered independent of, and superior to the civil power.

A plan had been formed to subject the Colonies to a jurisdiction foreign to their constitution, and unacknowledged by their laws.

Acts had been passed by the British legislature, for protecting, by a mock trial, the troops quartered among them from punishment, for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of the Colonies,

For cutting off their trade with all parts of the world,

For imposing taxes on them without their consent,

For depriving them, in many cases, of the benefit of trial by jury,

For transporting them beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences,

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into the English Colonies,

For taking away their charters, abolishing their most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of their governments,

For suspending the legislatures of the Colonies, and declaring the British Parliament invested with power to legislate for them in all cases whatsoever.

The Crown of Great Britain had abdicated the government of the Colonies, by declaring them out of its protection, and waging war against them.

Their seas had, in consequence, been plundered, their coasts ravaged, their towns burnt, the lives of their people lost.

Armies of foreign mercenaries had been hired to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, throughout the Colonies.

Their fellow citizens, taken on the high seas, had been constrained to bear arms against their country.

Domestic insurrections had been excited among them, and endeavours had been used to bring upon the inhabitants of their back settlements, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions they had petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; but their repeated supplications had been answered only by repeated injury.

Nor had they been wanting in attention to their British brethren. They had warned them, from time to time, of attempts made by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over the Colonies

nies. They had reminded them of the circumstances of their emigration, and settlement in this part of the world ; they had appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and conjured them, by the ties of their common kindred, to disavow those usurpations, as they would inevitably interrupt the connection and correspondence between both people ; but they too had been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity.

From these causes they judged it necessary to determine upon a separation from the people of Britain ; and to hold them as they held the rest of mankind,—“Enemies in war, in peace friends.”

“ We, therefore,” concluded they, “ the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States ; and that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved ; and that, as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things, which independent states may of right do.—And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.”

Such was the celebrated declaration of Independence, of which so much has been said and written. It was received by the people of America as a faultless piece, containing truths and assertions of which no man of discernment, and acquainted with the affairs

affairs of America, could entertain the least doubt. The grievances which it specified, were looked upon throughout the Colonies as intolerable to men of spirit, and such as none would submit to, that were not in a condition entirely helpless, and destitute of all means of redress. Possessing these, they would have thought themselves deserving of the most contemptuous treatment, if they had hesitated in doing themselves justice, after it had been so repeatedly refused them by those, from whom they had the fullest right to expect it; and who, as the authors of the injuries they had sustained, ought to have prevented them from having recourse to so desperate a remedy, by applying those in due time, for which the Colonies had so often petitioned. Such were the sentiments of the Americans.

That the people of America should have received this declaration with universal approbation and applause, was no ways surprizing. But what was truly a subject of amazement, was the universal assent and praise which it met with in all parts of Europe. This could only proceed from that spirit of invidiousness and malevolence, which was exerting itself every where to the prejudice of Great Britain. Its conduct respecting the Colonies, was not a subject of which the states and people on the European continent were competent to judge. The fact was, that whatever it had been, they would have equally condemned it, from the disposition they were in to favour and forward whatever could detriment this country.

C H A P. XXI.

Lord and General Howe appointed Commissioners and Commanders in Chief in America, by sea and land.—Operations of the British fleet and army under them.

1776.

AFTER this formal renunciation of their allegiance to Great Britain, and erecting themselves into an independent sovereignty, it behoved the people of America to call forth all their strength and abilities, in order to support effectually so resolute a measure.

Hitherto their affairs had prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations of the wisest amongst them. The expedition into Canada excepted, they had succeeded, in every enterprize they had formed; and had completely frustrated every attempt that had been concerted against them.

Their force at sea, though not consisting of large ships, was truly formidable from their numbers, and the captures they were continually making. They distressed the trade of Great Britain in every latitude; the West Indies swarmed with them; on the coast of America hardly any vessels could escape them, that did not sail under convoy. They infested the Mediterranean; they ventured even into the Bay of Biscay, and the neighbourhood of the British Channel.

Beside the great number of privateers fitted out at the expence of individuals, a considerable proportion of stout vessels, well equipped, and manned with excellent sailors, and expert commanders, were in the immediate pay of the Congress itself. A certain share of the prizes they took, was appropriated

prated to the public; the remainder was distributed among the captors.

At land nothing had been omitted to put every accessible place in a posture of defence: batteries were erected at all the usual and commodious landings along the coast: forts had been constructed in every situation that required them. The forces in the field, and in immediate readiness for service, were exceedingly numerous, and well disciplined. They amounted, at the time of the declaration of independency, to upwards of fourscore thousand men.

It was the general opinion of the European nations, that Great Britain, notwithstanding its vast naval superiority, and the regular armies it was about to send against America, would not be able to furnish a sufficient strength for the variety and complicatedness of military operations that would be required. It would be necessary to carry on several at the same time, in order to make a forcible impression on the Americans. Their dispositions for defence were such, that if they were not assailed effectually in many places at once, they would, by protracting the war, weary out and consume the British troops merely by skirmishes and partial engagements, and by harrassing them in that multiplicity of ways they would have it in their power to do, from the nature of their country, and the advantage of fighting upon their own ground. Here they would find an infinity of resources at hand, while those of the enemy would be extremely precarious, from their prodigious distance, and the time that would be lost in waiting for them.

The great strength of the British armament, on the other hand, was, by many good judges, esteemed capable of producing all the effects for which it was designed. It consisted of six ships of the line, and near thirty frigates, besides other armed vessels.

and a multitude of transports. On board of these was an army of thirty thousand men, as fine troops as any in Europe, furnished abundantly with all manner of warlike necessaries. Such an army had never yet been seen in this hemisphere; and Great Britain alone was able to send and support so vast a force at such a distance.

It was under the command of Lord Howe, as Admiral, and of his brother as General, both officers of eminent merit in their respective departments, and who possessed, in a high degree, the confidence and esteem of the nation, on account of their personal services, and the character of intrepidity inherent in their family.

The Province of New York, from its central situation, was fixed upon as the propereft for the commencement of military operations. As most parts of it were accessible by sea, it was not doubted the possession of it would be easily obtained. No situation could be more favourable for the motions of either the fleet or the army: hostilities could be carried on with equal speed and convenience to the troops employed in them, either in Connecticut or the Jerseys, or in the interior parts of New York. The subjugation of the first, would open the way to Massachusetts; of the second to Pennsylvania, and of the third to the country between them and Canada. By these means the communication would be cut off between the north and south Colonies, and a junction would be formed with the forces under the command of General Carlton. Could such a plan be carried into execution, it would, in all probability, decide the fate of America in one single campaign.

It was with the utmost cheerfulness the officers and soldiers of the army that had gone from Boston to Halifax, were apprized of their new destination. They had now remained above two months in this disagreeable

disagreeable climate, confined to the transports for want of quarters to accommodate them ashore, and without a sufficiency of those refreshments of which they stood so much in need.

As the season for action had been long begun, General Howe grew impatient of delay, and resolved to quit Halifax with the force he had, and proceed to New York, purposing there to wait the arrival of the reinforcements that were now on their way from England. He sailed accordingly about the middle of June, and at the end of the month arrived at Sandy Hook; a point of land that stands at the entrance into that great body of water, which is surrounded by New York, Staten, and Long Island, and is formed by the confluence of several rivets.

The Americans, who had long expected him, had fortified every place that was accessible on the island where the city of New York stands. It was garrisoned with an army; and provided with a numerous artillery, and every requisite for a vigorous defence. Long Island was also well guarded, and a large body of troops lay encamped at the most convenient landing-place.

As the reinforcements were daily expected, it was judged most prudent to undertake no descent at either of these islands till they were arrived. The troops were landed at Staten Island, lying opposite to the former, where many of the inhabitants joined them.

On the arrival of Lord Howe about the middle of July, a circular letter was sent by him to the several Governors who had been lately dispossessed of their authority by their respective Provinces, informing them of the commission he had received, and directing them to make as public as possible a Declaration accompanying the letter. Herein he made known the powers he was invested with by the legislature of Great Britain, in conjunction with his brother, of granting general, or particular pardons,

to all those who in the present confusions and disturbances, might have departed from their allegiance, and were now willing to return to their duty; and of declaring any colony, town, or district, to be in the King's peace; by which they would avoid the penalties they had incurred. It promised at the same time, that the services of those who contributed to the re-establishment of public tranquillity, should meet with due consideration.

This letter and declaration were printed by order of the Congress in all the news-papers, with a prefatory advertisement that they were thus made publick, in order to let the people of the United States know the nature of the powers with which the Commissioners were invested, and the terms with the expectation of which the British ministry had sought to amuse and to disarm them; that those who had still relied upon the justice and moderation of Britain, might now be convinced that they must trust to their valour alone for the preservation of their liberties.

In the mean time a letter was sent by Lord Howe to General Washington, to be delivered to him under the superscription of George Washington, Esq. But the General refused to receive it, as not being directed to him with the title and in the style suitable to his station. His conduct in this instance was particularly applauded by the Congress; and they ordained that in future none of their officers should receive letters or messages that were not addressed to them according to their respective rank.

In order to obviate this difficulty, Adjutant-General Paterson was sent by General Howe, with a letter directed to "George Washington, &c. &c. &c." His reception was extremely polite; upon his asking for the General, he was immediately admitted, and the usual formality of blind-folding was dispensed with, as a peculiar mark of respect. The Gener-

ral

cal received him in great form and dignity. The Adjutant expressed much concern in the behalf of his principals, on account of the difficulties that had arisen from the superscription of the letter; assured him of their high regard and esteem for his personal character, and that they had no intention to undervalue his rank. It was hoped therefore that the *et ceteras* would remove all obstructions to their mutual intercourse.

The General's answer was, that a letter written to a person invested with a public character, should specify it; otherwise it could not be distinguished from a letter on private business: true it was, the *et ceteras* implied every thing; but it was no less true, that they implied any thing. He could not, consistently with his character, receive any letter relating to public affairs, that should be directed to him, without a designation of his rank and office.

It was observed, in the course of conversation, by the Adjutant, that the powers entrusted to the Commissioners were very extensive; that they were ready to exert themselves to the utmost, in order to bring about a reconciliation; and that he hoped the General would consider this visit as a first step towards it. The General replied, that it did not appear that these powers consisted in any more than in granting pardons; but America not having committed any offence, asked for no forgiveness, and was only defending her unquestionable rights.

Thus ended a conference, from which it became evident, that all attempts in the same line would prove ineffectual at present; and that nothing short of a decided superiority in the field, would induce the Americans to relax of the resolutions they had taken so unanimously, and with so much deliberation and solemnity.

The arrival of the fleet and army in the neighbourhood of New York, had made no impression on

the Congress : they continued with the same inflexibility in the pursuit of the measures they had framed, executing them with great firmness, and punishing with severity all who opposed them.

Some time before the arrival of this armament, measures had been concerted for an insurrection at New York and Albany, the latter place especially, in favour of the British government. The expectations formed by the insurgents of being effectually supported by the British forces, then daily expected, induced them to this measure ; but they were discovered : some were executed, others imprisoned ; numbers who had fled from their houses, were treated as outlaws ; and the estates of all those against whom proofs could be found, were confiscated.

Such alterations were now taking place in every Province, as were judged best adapted to the republican system established by the declaration of independency. They acted herein with a boldness and confidence the more surprising, as the great force intended against them was daily increasing by arrivals from Britain. But the firmness of the Congress had inspired them with universal emulation. It was in the very face of this fleet and army, and while the first was casting anchor in sight of New York, and the second landing on Staten Island, that resolute body had declared America independent.

It was far in the month of August before the British forces could be collected. As soon as they were possessed of a sufficient strength, the commanders resolved to make an attempt upon Long Island, which lay more open to an attack than New York. Its spaciousness afforded better scope to the operations of an army, and it would furnish plenty of provisions.

Preparations being made by the fleet to cover the descent of the army, it effected a landing, unopposed,

Aug. 22, fed, between two small towns, called Utrecht and Gravesend, on the nearest shore to Staten Island. General Putnam lay encamped at a small distance with a numerous body, at a place called Brookland, on the northern shore. His camp was on a peninsula, the whole breadth of which was fortified. The East River, separating him from New York, was on his left; a marsh, extending to the water-side, on his right; and behind him was the bay. A range of hills, covered with woods, separated the British and Provincial armies. The road to the enemy lay through a village called Flat Bush: here began the ascent to the hills, and near it was the principal pass over them.

General Putnam ordered large detachments to occupy the hills and passes. The center of the British army, composed of the Hessians, took post at Flat Bush; the left was under General Grant, near the sea shore; and the right, consisting of the major part of the British troops, was under General Clinton, and Lords Percy and Cornwallis.

On the twenty-sixth, towards evening, General Clinton, with the van of that part of the army, moved from Flat Bush across a large extent of country, and seized upon a pass in the hills of the utmost importance, which had been neglected by the enemy. The road being thus cleared, the main body, which followed close under Lord Percy, crossed the hills without molestation, and descended into a low and level country, that lay opposite to General Putnam's lines.

Early in the morning of the twenty-seventh, the engagement was begun at Flat Bush, by the Hessians, under General Heister, and towards the water side by General Grant; and a heavy fire of cannon and musketry continued with equal vigour on both sides during several hours. The ships in the mean while made several motions on the right of the en-

my, which extended towards the water side, and was engaged with General Grant, in order to distract their attention from their left and rear, against which the principal attack was intended. Those who were engaged with the Hessians, first discovered the danger they were exposed to from the movements made by the British troops under General Clinton, and began immediately to retreat towards their camp ; but they were intercepted by them, and forced back into the woods, where they met again with the Hessians. Surrounded and over-powered with numbers, they had no other resource left, than to break through them : this some were so fortunate as to effect ; but many were cut to pieces in attempting it ; others escaped through the woods, where numbers also were killed or taken.

Their right, which was engaged with General Grant, was too late apprized of the misfortune which had befallen their left and center, to provide for their own safety in due time. Their retreat was cut off by a body of British troops, which had occupied the ground on their rear, and who now fell upon them with great fury. Some of them took shelter in the woods ; the greater number endeavoured to make their way through a marsh that lay between them and their lines ; but here many were drowned or perished in the mud.

The victory was total and complete. Their loss, it has been asserted, amounted to between three and four thousand ; of which more than two thousand were slain in the battle and pursuit. Their behaviour did them no discredit ; while any hopes remained, they stood their ground with courage ; and when a retreat became necessary, they showed no less spirit in their endeavours to effect it,

Among those Americans who fell on this day, a regiment from Maryland was particularly regretted. It consisted wholly of young men of the best families

lies in that Province. They behaved with astonishing intrepidity, and were every one killed or wounded.

This was the greatest blow the Americans had yet received. The loss they sustained in the field, though great, did not equal that depression of mind they underwent in consequence of it; and which outweighs all other calamities in a contest of this nature. What aggravated it still more, it followed directly the proclamation of independency. By the enemies to their cause, it was represented as a punishment; and to the weak-minded it appeared as a sinister omen.

They lost, in this action, some of their best officers and bravest soldiers. The body under General Putnam was composed of selected troops; and those which took possession of the hills were the choicest, consisting chiefly of marksmen. Had not the pass been discovered, which opened the way for the British troops to cross the hills, and assail them in the rear, they had no doubt of being able, from the advantage of their position, to have maintained their ground successfully.

Great valour and activity were displayed on this occasion by the British troops. They had long wished for an opportunity of meeting the Provincials on open ground. They found it; and it behoved them to improve it to their honour. They were conscious it was at stake. Had they not been victorious, with the advantages they had fought and obtained, their reputation would have suffered a stain, which would not have easily been effaced.

So impetuous was their ardour, that the eagerness of their pursuit could hardly be restrained by the orders of their Generals: they followed the enemy close up to their lines, and would have assaulted them directly; but the certitude of carrying them without loss by a regular attack, prevented an indulgence of this

this warmth, which must undoubtedly, however successful, have been attended with no small effusion of blood. The Provincials were still not less than fifteen thousand strong ; and would, if compelled to a conflict that must have proved so critical and decisive, have probably made a most desperate defence.

The conduct and military skill exhibited throughout the operations of this day, were highly applauded by all judges, as well as the diligence and exactness with which every commanding officer acquitted himself in the execution of his respective orders.

This victory was purchased, when the importance of it is considered, at a very cheap rate. The killed and wounded in the British army, did not exceed three hundred and eighteen ; of whom only sixty one were slain. Eleven hundred of the enemy were taken, among whom were three Generals.

The British army encamped that very evening in front of the enemies lines, and the next day began to make preparations for a formal attack. But the Provincials, upon examination, appeared so diminished by this defeat, that their officers thought it would be imprudent to venture a defence of their camp, unless it were assaulted before they could make a retreat,

General Washington himself, though a man of a fearless disposition, and not apt to despond in the worst of times, did not think it proper to risk a second action, till the first impressions of that which was just terminated to their disadvantage had subsided. He had crossed over from New York in the height of the engagement, but too late to retrieve the fortune of the day. He had the mortification of seeing some of his best troops slaughtered or taken, without being able to afford them any assistance. The utmost he could now propose, was to

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savè those that remained. He was well convinced that an army so numerous, provided with such an artillery, composed of such excellent soldiers, and elated with victory, could hardly be withstood at the present moment. New York required to be strengthened, and no time was to be lost in withdrawing to that place. Were the wind to permit the British squadron to station itself between the camp and that city, all might inevitably be lost: should the troops on Long Island be defeated, the remainder of the Continental army might be so discouraged, as to lose all hope, and no longer dare to face the enemy. A retreat was therefore indispensable; but this too was become a matter of difficulty, from the position of the British army, investing their works, and watching all their motions.

In this extremity of danger, General Washington exerted himself with that vigilance and circumspection that peculiarly characterised him. During the night of the twenty-ninth of August, favoured by obscurity, and in the profoundest silence, he withdrew from his camp, and conveyed his troops to the adjacent ferry, with their baggage, and as much of their military stores and artillery as could conveniently be carried off. Here they embarked, and landed safely on the opposite shore. This retreat was conducted with so much order and secrecy, that it was not discovered till the next morning, when the British troops took possession of the camp and artillery abandoned by the enemy.

A few days after this evacuation of Long Island, General Sullivan, who had been made a prisoner in the late action, was sent by Lord Howe to the Congress with a message, importuning that though he could not consistently treat with that assembly in the character they had assumed, yet he would gladly confer with some of their members in their private capacity

capacity; and would meet them at any place they would appoint: He informed them, that he was empowered, with the General, to terminate the contest between Great Britain and her Colonies in a manner acceptable to both. He expressed an earnest desire that a settlement might take place before the events of war became so decisive as to render it no longer a matter of choice for one of the parties to treat. Were the Congress inclined to enter into an agreement, much might be granted to them which they had not required. Should the conference produce the probability of an accommodation, the authority of Congress would be acknowledged, in order to render the treaty valid and complete in every respect.

The answer to this message was, that the Congress of the free and independent States of America, could not, consistently with the trust reposed in them, send any of their members to confer with him in a private capacity. But that in order to evince how desirous they were to restore peace and amity upon equitable conditions, they would depute a committee of their body to learn whether he was authorised to treat with persons commissioned by the Congress for that purpose, and what proposals he had to offer.

The committee appointed for this business, consisted of Doctor Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Rutledge, who waited upon Lord Howe at Staten Island, where they were received and entertained with great civility and respect.

The conference was opened by Lord Howe's acquainting them, that though he could not treat with them as a committee of Congress, yet he was authorised to confer with any gentlemen of influence in the Colonies, on the means of restoring a good understanding between Great Britain and America.

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To this the Deputies replied, that they could not consider themselves in any other character than that in which Congress had placed them; but should however attend to any proposition he might have authority to make for the purpose he had mentioned.

Lord Howe then entered upon the subject of the meeting in a discourse of some length. The chief purport of it was to inform them of the sincere and earnest desire of the King and ministry to make the British government easy and acceptable to them in every respect. In case of submission, they were assured, that those acts of Parliament which were so obnoxious to them, would undergo a revisal, and the instructions to Governors would be reconsidered; that if any just causes of complaint were found in the acts, or the instructions, they might be removed.

The Deputies made answer, that a return to the domination of Great Britain was not now to be expected. They mentioned the repeated petitions of the Colonies to the King and Parliament, which they complained had been treated with contempt, and answered by additional injuries. It was not, said they, till the last act of Parliament, which denounced war against them, and put them out of the King's protection, that the Americans declared themselves independent. This declaration had been called for by the people of the Colonies in general.— Every Colony approved of it, and they all now considered themselves as independent states, and had settled, or were occupied in settling, their governments accordingly. It was not therefore in the power of the Congress to agree for them that they should return to their former dependent situation.

"There was no doubt," continued they, "that the Americans were inclined to peace; and willing to enter into any treaty with Britain, that might be advan-

advantageous to both countries. If there was the same good disposition in Britain, it would be easier for Lord Howe, though not empowered at present to treat with them as independent states, to obtain fresh powers from the British Court for that purpose, than it would be for Congress to procure them from the several Colonies, to consent to submission."

Such an explicit declaration of their sentiments on the subject in question, showed at once that no accommodation was at the present to be expected, and put an end to the conference.

Such was the report made to Congress by the committee. "It did not appear upon the whole," added they, "that Lord Howe's commission contained any other authority of importance, than that of granting pardons, with such exceptions, as the commissioners should think proper to make, and of declaring America, or any part of it, to be in the King's peace upon submission. The residue of the commission consisted in the power of inquiring into the state of America, and of conferring and consulting with any persons the commissioners might think fit. But upon their representing the result of these conversations to the ministry, these, on a supposition the Colonies were to submit, might, after all, or might not, at their pleasure, make any alterations in the former instructions to Governors, or propose in Parliament any amendment of the acts complained of. Any expectation, therefore, from the effect of the powers lodged in the commissioners, would be too uncertain and precarious to be relied upon by America, had she even continued in her state of dependence."

As the Congress seemed now immovably determined to persist in the resolution of maintaining independency at all events, Lord and General Howe, in quality of commissioners, judged it necessary to publish a declaration, wherein, after taking notice

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of that Assembly's refusal to accept of the terms of reconciliation offered to them, they informed the people of America, that they were equally desirous to confer with all well-disposed persons, upon the means of restoring the public tranquility, and establishing a permanent union with any Colony, as a part of the British empire.

Herein it was represented, that it being the undoubted intention of the King and Parliament to remove any causes by which the people of America might be aggrieved, it behoved the inhabitants at large, seriously to reflect upon their present condition, and to judge for themselves, whether it were more consistent with their honour and happiness, to offer up their lives as a sacrifice to the unjust and precarious cause, in which they were engaged, or to return to their allegiance, accept the blessings of peace, and be secured in the enjoyment of their liberty and their properties, upon the true principles of the British constitution.

In the mean time, the most active and vigorous measures were resolved upon. The Provincial forces that had evacuated Long Island, were now posted at New York; where they had erected batteries on every spot that could admit of them. They were incessantly occupied in firing upon the British troops and shipping, which kept up no less constant a fire upon them. The East River lay between both armies. Its breadth in this place was about twelve hundred yards. The British troops were extremely impatient to pass it, and attack the enemy, who lay partly in the city of New York, and partly on the main land, guarding every place where they suspected the royal army might attempt to make a descent.

The ships of war had now stationed themselves in that part of the river which faces the city, and were continually engaged with the batteries on shore. It was

was not without much difficulty they silenced those which had proved the most troublesome, and enabled the troops to seize upon those islands, which, though small, annoyed them considerably by the continual fire of the cannon planted upon them, and without the possession of which, the operations intended could not take place. This unceasing cannonade lasted several days, and kept both parties in continual alarms.

The intention was to make a descent upon the island where New York stands. In order to divert the enemy's attention from the real place of attack, several ships were directed to move up the river, to the north of the island; other parts were threatened in the same manner. The more to embarrass the enemy, a small island was secured facing the center of New York Island.

On the 15th of September, a large body of British troops embarked, unobserved by the Provincial army, and proceeded to a bay three miles to the north above the city. As the enemy had not expected they would have chosen this place, they had not prepared it for any considerable resistance. The ships attacked their works with so much vigour, that they were soon abandoned, and the troops set on shore.

When the enemy saw them landed, they did not chuse to risk a defence of the city, and left it instantly, retiring to the north of the island, where their principal force was collected. They lost upon this occasion a great part of their artillery, and military stores, as well as a considerable number of prisoners. They did not, however, retire without fighting, and engaged the British troops wherever they found an opportunity of making an advantageous stand. But it was observed at the same time, that they did not act altogether so vigorously as in the late action upon Long Island, whether it might

Might proceed from the loss they had there sustained of many of their best officers and soldiers, of that it had somewhat dispirited them.

The length of the island of New York is full fifteen miles; but the breadth not more than two, where broadest. This made it easy for the British forces to extend their camp from shore to shore. The enemy lay in great force opposite to them. They had strengthened the ground they occupied in such a manner, as to render it very difficult and dangerous to attack them. In order to secure a communication, and a retreat, if necessary, to the continent, they had been particularly careful to fortify the passage called King's Bridge, by erecting very considerable works on both sides of the water.

Their distance from the British encampment was not above two miles; but the intervening ground was full of narrow passes and defiles, which were in their possession, and of such a nature, as to enable a small number to maintain them with facility against a much greater.

General Washington had very judiciously chosen this position. He could from thence advance or retire at pleasure, without apprehending to be cut off in case of a defeat, as he was determined to risk no general engagement, and to send out only skirmishing parties, these, in case of repulse, could easily withdraw to their main body, which was so posted, as to cover their retreat, without being compelled to expose themselves out of their strong holds, in order to secure it.

Another motive was, that he found it necessary to give them time to recover from the discouragement they had experienced from their late defeats. The skilfulness and discipline observed in the Royal army, they had found, to their cost, to be much superior to their own; and though far from being deficient in courage, yet they perceived that

the advantages resulting from them were such as time and experience only would procure. For this reason, their commander, without venturing any thing decisive, kept them in continual exercise against their enemy. Skirmishes and encounters happened daily ; and it begun to be noticed by the British troops, that the Americans gradually recovered their spirits, and behaved with much more firmness than they had done lately.

The possession of New York was not attended with all the advantages that had been expected. It had been concerted by the enemy, previous to its falling into the hands of the British troops, if it were not found tenable, to commit it to the flames, rather than these should reap any benefit from being possessed of it. The precipitation with which they abandoned that city, prevented them at that time from carrying their intent into execution ; but a few days after, some persons, who had been left behind for that purpose, watching the opportunity of dry weather and a high wind, set fire to the city in the dead of night, by means of combustibles, which they had disposed with great dexterity in various places. The conflagration was dreadful ; many parts at once being suddenly in a blaze. Notwithstanding the speed and activity with which the soldiers and sailors exerted themselves, the rapidity of the flames was such, that a fourth part of the city was consumed. Several of those who had, it was said, been the incendiaries, were, on being discovered, treated without mercy ; and were, by the irritated seamen and soldiery, thrown instantly into the midst of the fire.

The situation of the enemy in the strong grounds between the city and King's Bridge, rendering an attack there extremely hazardous, it was determined to make such movements as to compel him to abandon

12th Oct. 1776. don them: For this purpose an embarkation was made of most of the troops in flat-bottomed boats, in which they were safely conveyed through a dangerous passage called Hell Gate, and landed near the town of West Chester, lying on the continent towards Connecticut.

Lord Percy was left with a considerable force for the protection of New York, while the fleet surrounded that island on every side, and from the judicious position of the ships, could at any time afford a shelter, in case of a disaster, or improve any success that might be obtained.

From its encampment near West Chester, after having received a supply of men and provisions, the army moved to New Rochelle, situated on the sound separating Long Island from the continent. Here being joined by fresh reinforcements, it was determined to intercept the communication between the Provincial army and Connecticut, and to surround it in such a manner, as to force it, through want of provisions, to leave its strong holds, and venture an engagement to extricate itself.

The Royal army was now posted in what is called the lower road from New York to the Northern Colonies. The upper lies through an extent of high lands, known by the name of White Plains, full of craggy hills, and difficult passes. Thither the army began its march, after leaving a sufficient force to secure the lower road, and the communication with those places from whence stores and necessaries were to arrive.

General Howe's motions greatly alarmed the provincials.—They perceived that by remaining in their encampment, though too strong to be forced, yet they would be straitened to such a degree, as to be compelled to quit it at a disadvantage, of which he would not fail to make the most, to their great detriment, if not their total ruin. Were an engage-

ment to ensue, unless they proved victorious, their condition would be critical in the extreme; a retreat would be next to impracticable, from the superiority in number of the British forces, and the opposition they would meet from the shipping.

But exclusive of these considerations, fatigue, bad quarters, want of cloathing, and of some of the most essential necessaries, salt especially, had occasioned much illness among the Provincials, which was further increased by a vice very predominant among many of the Americans, indolence, and carelessness in what related to their persons, furniture, and manner of feeding: a deficiency the more surprising, as they chiefly originate from the English, who are indisputably the most cleanly people upon earth, and whose examples and manners they had always been fond of imitating.

The evidence and proximity of the danger they were in, called up the whole attention of the American commanders. In a council of war summoned upon this occasion, it was resolved to quit their present position, and extend the army into a long, but well secured line, by throwing up works along its front, and fortifying all the advantageous positions they could seize. In this manner the Provincial army stretched along the ground opposite to that where the Royal forces were marching, from Valentine's Hill, near King's-Bridge, on the right, to the White Plains, on the left. The Bronx, a river of considerable depth, lay on their front, between them and the Royal army; and the North River covered their rear, at no great distance; the intermediate space between securing a passage for their heavy baggage up the country, in case of necessity.

The position of the Provincials was so advantageous, that great circumspection was requisite to prevent them from molesting the Royal army. It moved forwards with great compactness and vigilance,

lance, and left no opening for the enemy to avail himself of. This did not however discourage them from pushing sundry detachments over the Bronx, and skirmishing upon every favourable occasion; but though sometimes successful, they were generally worsted. Upon the approach of the Royal army to the White Plains, they were obliged at last to call in all their detachments, and to form one single encampment on the banks of the Bronx, in front of the British army, on the opposite side of that river.

On the twenty-eighth day of October, at break of day, the British troops, divided in two columns, advanced towards the White Plains. The enemy maintained the ground in front, occupied by their several detached parties, till near twelve o'clock, when they withdrew to their main body, which was preparing for the more serious engagement which they foresaw must now take place.

At noon, the British army drew up in order of battle, and marched to the enemies. They were strongly posted upon an eminence, the sides of which were protected by the Bronx. Over this river there was but one convenient ford, the banks of which were very steep and rocky. On perceiving the approach of the British troops, they came out of their lines, and occupied the grounds adjoining to the ford with a large force, and a considerable number of field-pieces.

Four British regiments, with a body of Hessians, and some companies of dragoons, were selected to force this important passage. They marched down to the ford, crossed it, and through a dreadful fire of musketry, grape-shot, and cannon, ascended the hill, the bottom of which commences at the ford, in excellent order, and with great intrepidity. Upon gaining the summit of that eminence, they were at first bravely received by the enemy; but their attack

tack was conducted with such steadiness and vigour, that they drove them from their posts, and compelled them to retire towards their entrenchments.

By this time, large divisions of the British army had followed that which forced the passage of the Bronx. They made themselves completely masters of the ground that had been possessed by the enemy, after dislodging them from a variety of posts, which they maintained with great obstinacy till towards evening.

A large division of the British and Hessian troops encamped in the night within cannon-shot of the enemy's entrenchments; and the whole army lay upon their arms, intending to attack the enemy's camp next morning. But as soon as it was light, the provincials were discovered to have made such additional works to the lines they had thrown up before, that it was judged too dangerous to attack them without a greater strength. Reinforcements being arrived, preparations were made for the designed assault, but it was prevented by a rainy and tempestuous night, that quite frustrated the arrangements that had been taken for that purpose.

But whatever show the provincials had made of a resolution to stand their ground, when they saw that dispositions were making in the British army which indicated a vigorous attack, they thought it most advisable to withdraw. They accordingly broke up their camp in the night of the first of November, and removed into a mountainous country, called the Township of Newcastle, having previously set fire to the houses in White Plains, and the neighbourhood.

What principally intimidated the Americans on this occasion, was the formidable appearance of the batteries with which they saw their lines threatened, from several heights surrounding them. They were also no less apprehensive that General Howe might possess

possess himself of the hills that lay in the rear of the Provincial army, by which he would command it in such a manner, that a retreat would become impracticable in case of a defeat.

Neither was a formal engagement any part of the system formed by General Washington. To avoid it was the settled intent of all his operations, which tended to no more than to harass and fatigue the enemy, and accustom his own people gradually to face them, that whenever it should be absolutely requisite to come to a pitched battle, they might be so well trained and used to face their enemies, that a reasonable confidence might be placed in their exertions.

In the mean time, General Howe fully perceived, that notwithstanding his repeated endeavours, he could not bring the enemy to an action, and that from the situation of the country, and their knowledge of every place and spot where they could fix themselves advantageously, it would be impossible to compel them to fight but upon the most unequal and hazardous terms. He therefore took the determination of ceasing a pursuit, that would only prove the more ineffectual the longer it was continued, and to turn his attention to the dispossessing them of the forts and fastnesses they still retained in the neighbourhood of New York. The distance at which they had retired, would render the conquest of these places a work of much less difficulty than it would have been, had such an attempt taken place before the British troops had gained a decided superiority in the field.

In order to carry this measure into execution, a body of troops advanced to King's Bridge, from which the Americans withdrew, without opposition, into Fort Washington, which was immediately invested. This fort was situated on the western side of New York island, at a small distance from King's

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bridge, and almost opposite to Fort Lee, lately erected on the other side of the water, in the Province of Jersey. The fortifications, though in good order, were not sufficiently strong to resist the weight of such artillery as would be brought against it, if necessary. Its chief strength was in its situation, and the difficulty of approaching it without being exposed to a heavy fire from the garrison, and the adjacent works and lines that surrounded it on every side. It was defended by three thousand men, and well provided with artillery, and seemed to threaten a stout resistance.

The Governor, Colonel Magaw, being summoned to surrender, and having made answer that he would defend the fort to the last extremity, it was determined to make a general attack. Four divisions of the army were employed for this purpose. One of them, composed of Hessians, under General Knyphausen, moved forward about noon, 16th Nov. 1776. from King's Bridge; a thick wood lay before him, where the enemy was posted so advantageously, that it was a considerable time before he could penetrate. During this attack, a body of British light infantry advanced upon a party of the enemy, who were posted behind rocks and trees, from whence they kept up an incessant fire. They dispersed them, however, by climbing a steep ascent, from whence they came down upon the enemy with such impetuosity, that they were unable to withstand them. They were followed and supported by a detachment of the Guards, under General Mathews, and another body of British troops, under Lord Cornwallis. In the mean time, another division, under Lord Percy, carried an advanced work; and Colonel Sterling, at the head of the forty-second regiment, forced his way up a difficult height, which was very resolutely defended: he gained the summit, where he took a considerable number

number of prisoners, and greatly facilitated Lord Percy's success.

Colonel Ralle, who led the right column of General Knyphausen's attack, forced the enemy from their posts, after an obstinate resistance, pushed forward to their advanced works, and lodged his column within one hundred yards of the fort. He was soon after joined by the left column, under General Knyphausen; upon which the garrison surrendered prisoners of war.

As Fort Lee lay opposite to Fort Washington, it was necessary to secure it, in order to acquire the full command of the North River. To this intent Lord Cornwallis crossed over the river to the Jersey side, with a strong body, and marched with all expedition towards the fort, in order, if possible, to surprize the garrison. Herein he certainly would have succeeded, had not a countryman apprized them of their danger. It was with much difficulty, 18th Nov. 1776. effected an escape, leaving all their artillery and warlike stores, their tents standing, and all their provisions.

In consequence of these successes, the British troops penetrated into the furthermost parts of both East and West Jersey, without meeting any opposition, the enemy carefully avoiding them every where. They extended the quarters in which they proposed to winter, from New Brunswick, as far as the river Delaware. Had a sufficient number of boats been at hand, for the ferrying over the British troops, it is highly probable that Philadelphia would have fallen into their hands, so great was the consternation among the Americans at that period. But as an attempt of this kind had been expected, care had been duly taken to remove them in time.

While Lord Cornwallis, and the different parties under his command, were over-running the Jerseys,

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an expedition was undertaken against Rhode Island, under the direction of General Clinton, and Admiral Sir Peter Parker. Their success was complete; the provincials abandoned the island at their approach, and they made themselves masters of it without losing a man. By this measure, the American squadron, under Commodore Hopkins, was compelled to withdraw as far up the river Providence as it was practicable, and to continue there blocked up and useless.

The success which had attended the British arms during the present campaign, began to make a serious impression upon numbers of the people throughout the continent. Notwithstanding the firmness expressed by their leaders, many seemed to entertain but faint hopes of their being able to continue effectually their resistance to the power of Britain.— Such as were disinclined to hostile measures, were not wanting to represent in their strongest light, the calamities which had already been experienced in so many parts of the continent, and the still greater miseries they should endure by persisting in a contest that appeared so unequal.

These representations had their weight with multitudes. Notwithstanding the violence with which the warm advocates of independency supported the propriety of that measure, there were many who did not scruple openly to declare, that peace and reconciliation with Great Britain, would have been far more eligible.

Sentiments of this kind, though combated with great force and energy by the contrary party, were the more alarming to those who were at the head of public affairs, as they daily perceived a visible declension of that ardour in the cause for which they were contending, which had so forcibly animated all classes in the last campaign, and the beginning of the present. They had promised themselves a

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continuance of this disposition. Relying upon the spirit that manifested itself throughout the Colonies, they had ventured to take the bold and decisive resolution of declaring America independent. The confidence with which they had acted before, and after that measure, had surprized the world, and inclined reflecting people to think, that they had more resources in contemplation than they chose to divulge.

But when in this depression of their circumstances, they saw none of that assistance appear which they conjectured had been expected, and in the certitude of which they imagined that so many daring measures had been taken, they began to call in doubt the prudence and foresight of those who had adopted them, and to be of opinion, that rashness and intemperate councils had produced them. The danger was so great, the pressures of every kind so heavy, that it now seemed, unless they had provided friends to succour them in their present difficulties, they would unavoidably sink under them; and that, if having endeavoured to obtain them, they had failed in the attempt, they were guilty of a fatal precipitation and oversight in the management of their affairs, and had acted very unwisely in bidding defiance to the power of Great Britain.

C H A P. XXII.

Transactions in Canada.

1776.

WHILE the campaign in the Province of New York and its adjacencies was carried on with so much vigour and activity, the operations in Canada were no less spirited and remarkable.

After the expulsion of the Provincial troops from those parts, and the restoration of peace and security to the government of Quebec, General Carlton turned his attention to the great object he had long had in view, that of penetrating into the Colonies by way of the Lakes.

The Provincials were now collected in great force at Crown Point, and were absolute masters of Lake Champlain, where Britain had not a single vessel to oppose them. Had not this been the case, they would have been pursued in their retreat, by the troops under General Burgoyne so closely, that it is probable the discouragement they were in, from the losses they had sustained, and from that illness so much dreaded in America, the small pox, which was then fatally raging among them, would have given so decided an ascendancy to the British arms, that all resistance would have fallen before them; they would have reduced all the forts that commanded the communication between Canada and the Colonies, and opened an entrance into these, that would have facilitated the operations of the fleets and armies of Great Britain in every other quarter.

The principal point now in view, was to remove those obstacles with all possible expedition. This was an arduous undertaking, full of difficulties and impe-

impediments, and that required a peculiar degree of courage and perseverance to surmount. But the necessity of accomplishing it, infused uncommon animation into all those who were concerned, and produced such efforts and exertions as were truly great and astonishing.

In order to acquire a superiority upon the Lake, it was calculated that no less than thirty vessels would be required. Some of the largest, indeed, came from England; but it was necessary to take them entirely to pieces, and to re-construct them, besides the immense labour which the carrying and conveying of such cumbersome and prodigious loads occasioned.

The greatest obstruction lay in those rapid currents of water, that run between Lake Champlain and the River St. Lawrence. Here the toil and patience of the British seamen and soldiers were almost incredible: they transported over land, and dragged up these rapids, thirty large long boats, a number of flat-bottomed boats of considerable burthen, a gondola of thirty tons, and above four hundred batteaux.

This stupendous undertaking was completed in three months. No less a dispatch was wanted. The importance of the object, and the shortness of the time that would be left for military operations, from the lateness of the season, were motives that hastened the labour and diligence with which this armament was equipped, to such a degree, that the principal vessel, carrying three masts, and eighteen twelve pounders, was finished in twenty eight days from the laying of her keel; and completely rigged and fitted for action. The same speed and eagerness atchieved the whole of this laborious and perplexing busines, in a proportionable space of time.

It was intended, after securing the navigation of the Lakes, and taking possession of the forts commanding

manding them, to push forwards with all expedition to Albany, where they would meet with such accommodations as would enable them to winter commodiously. In this case they would be at hand, as soon as the severity of that season was over, to co-operate in so decisive a manner with the army at New York, as to put a successful termination to the war early in the spring.

In the beginning of October, the fleet was in readiness. It consisted, exclusive of the ship already mentioned, of two stout schooners, the one mounting fourteen, the other twelve six pounders, a large flat bottomed radeau, with six twenty-four, and six twelve pounders, and a gondola with eight nine pounders. Twenty vessels of lesser size, called gun boats, carried each a brass piece of ordnance, from nine to twenty-four pounders, or howitzers. Several long boats were equipped in the same manner. Besides these, there was a great number of boats and tenders of various sizes, to serve as transports for the troops, baggage, warlike stores, provisions, and all the other appurtenances of the army, that was to be conveyed over the Lake under the protection of this fleet.

It was manned with a select body of seamen, and the guns were served by a detachment of the corps of artillery. Officers and soldiers, chosen out of the troops that belonged to this expedition, were appointed to the management of the small arms. Those who were present on this occasion, unanimously concurred in acknowledging that they had never seen a completer preparation both for military and naval service.

The naval force of the provincials bore no proportion to the British. The list amounted to no more than fifteen vessels, the largest of which was a schooner, and mounted twelve six and four pounders. Notwithstanding they knew the impor-

stance of preserving the superiority on the Lake, and had exerted themselves to the utmost of their power, they had not been able to attain their point in any degree adequate to the pressingness of the occasion. The truth was, they were deficient in many requisites for that purpose. Besides the want of materials for construction, they had not a sufficiency of other stores, and their sea ports were so taken up in the building of privateers, and ships for the service of Congress, that no carpenters could be spared.

They prepared themselves, however, with the force they had, to encounter that of Britain; and endeavoured to supply the defect of strength, by the dexterity of their management. They were commanded by General Arnold, lately promoted to this rank, on account of his gallant behaviour in many instances, since the commencement of the war. Though not bred a seaman, he had exhibited so many proofs of an uncommon genius, in whatever he had attempted, that Congress did not hesitate to trust him with the important commission of defending the Lakes against a much superior power.

On the eleventh of October, General Carlton, at the head of the British fleet, came up with the Provincial armament. It was drawn up with great skill, between an island and the main land, in order to prevent the British fleet from surrounding it. An action now began that lasted some hours, and was maintained with equal courage on both sides. The wind being unfavourable, prevented the strongest vessels of the British fleet from coming to action. The engagement was supported by a schooner of twelve six pounders, and the gun boats: they behaved with extraordinary firmness, but the inequality of such a combat, induced General Carlton to draw them off, and to order the fleet to be anchored

in a line, that it might, on a change of wind, be ready for an immediate attack upon the enemy.

The provincials lost in this day's fight, a vessel of twelve guns, which was the strongest they had; together with one of their best gondolas. Great execution was done among their other vessels by the British gun boats, in which the corps of artillery was chiefly stationed.

From the loss that had befallen them, they were now fully convinced that they would not be able to stand an attack from the whole fleet; they determined therefore to make the best of their way to Crown Point, where they should lie under the shelter of the guns of that fortress. They took the advantage of the ensuing night accordingly, and, favoured by darkness, withdrew unperceived, and were the next morning out of sight: but the British fleet pursued them with so much expedition, that after a chace of near two days, they were overtaken upon the second, and compelled to come to action in their defence.

It continued with great warmth upwards of two hours. Those vessels, in the mean while, which were most a-head, crowded sail and effected their escape: they passed Crown Point and ran for Ticonderoga. Only two galleys, and five gondolas, remained with General Arnold. With these he made a long and intrepid stand; but his second in command, General Waterburg, being taken with his vessel, and the others making but a faint resistance, he determined, in order to prevent his people and shipping from falling into the enemy's hands, to run these ashore, and set them on fire. He executed his intention with great skilfulness.

Though General Arnold had been unsuccessful on this occasion, the disparity of strength duly considered, he lost no reputation, and rose on the contrary in the estimation of his countrymen. He had

had, in their opinion, acquitted himself with no less ability in this naval encounter, than he had done at land before. One particular gained him much applause. He remained on board the vessel he commanded, and kept her colours flying, till she was on fire, to prevent the enemy from boarding her and striking them.

This victory over the Provincial fleet was complete and decisive. It broke entirely their naval force upon the Lake; a few only of their vessels escaped to Lake George; and the garrison of Crown Point, having destroyed whatever could not be moved off, evacuated it, and withdrew to Ticonderoga.

After taking possession of Crown Point, General Carlton had conceived the design of attacking the latter. To this intent parties were detached to reconnoitre it, and vessels approached it on the Lake with the same view. But the fortifications appeared so strong, the garrison so numerous, and so many other impediments presented themselves, that it was thought expedient to lay the design aside, until the return of spring, when he would be assisted by the favourableness of the weather in an enterprize, which the lateness of the season, and the probability of its being obstructed by the severity of approaching winter, rendered extremely doubtful and hazardous.

These considerations induced General Carlton to conduct his army back to Canada, where they could be stationed in convenient winter quarters, and open the next campaign in health and vigour. The force intended for the operations to be then pursued was to be strongly reinforced, and great efforts made to strike a decisive blow. As the passage over the Lakes was now cleared, and no time would be lost in preparing for it, as happened in the present campaign, the march of the army would be expeditious, and the impression it would make, rapid and forcible.

ble. Sanguine expectations were also entertained that the victorious army, under General Howe, would find such employment for the Provincial troops, that instead of sparing any for the reinforcement of those at Ticonderoga, all that could be collected in New England, would be required for the support of General Washington. Thus an easy road would be opened to the royal army in Canada. Assisted by a variety of advantages, and retarded by few difficulties, it would take the field with the most flattering prospects; and while the southern Colonies were falling beneath the British arms on one side, the northern would be equally compelled to submit on the other.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIII.

Transactions in the Jerseys.

1776.

THE great success with which the Royal armies closed this campaign, had given them a degree of confidence that augmented daily, from the little prospect remaining to the Congress of being able to retrieve their affairs. Their army was now, through losses in battle, the numbers made prisoners, and desertions, considerably diminished. But that which contributed to break it up effectually, was the principle upon which it had been first raised and embodied. The term for which the men enlisted was only a twelvemonth, at the expiration of which they were at liberty to quit the service. This, doubtless, was the readiest method of procuring soldiers, at a time when, perhaps, no other expedient was expected to be ever wanted; but now, that the contest was becoming daily more serious, it was evidently necessary to form a more settled and durable establishment in the military line.

Unaccustomed to the severe restraint of a soldier's life, nothing but the zeal with which all classes were animated for the common defence, could have prevailed upon them to submit to the hardships accompanying such a profession. Having fulfilled their agreement, they thought it equally incumbent on their fellow countrymen, to undergo their share of this public burthen, as well as themselves.

Herein they certainly reasoned very justly; but however they might be justified by the principles of equity in relinquishing the service, it was utterly inconsistent with all ideas of good policy. A rota-

tion of military duty might have answered, had they been all equally experienced; but where, on the contrary, they were equally new to the business, it was requisite that such as had gained some knowledge in it, should persevere in the service: especially as those whom they were to oppose in the field were veterans in the profession, against whom every one should now be summoned that was capable of being of any utility.

The American army was now entirely disbanded. Out of near thirty thousand men, of which it consisted at the time when General Howe landed on Staten Island, hardly three thousand remained embodied. These, though probably the best troops they had, were too inconsiderable a number to form any reliance upon, against the attempts that were expected from the enemy. The military turn they were endued with, or had acquired, and their attachment to the cause they were fighting for, and perhaps to the General that commanded them, were the motives that prevented them from following the example of their fellow-soldiers. But whatever cause retained them together, it proved, in the issue, a circumstance much more important and decisive, than could at that time have been imagined.

In the mean while, various distresses were accumulating upon the Congress, and every day seemed to add fresh reasons to look upon their condition as desperate. Among other unfortunate accidents, one befel them which was peculiarly calamitous in their present circumstances. General Lee had with great pains and diligence, gathered a considerable number of men, with whom he was marching with all possible speed to the assistance of General Washington, who was expecting him, at the head of the Pennsylvanian militia. By the junction of their forces they hoped to form a body sufficient to guard the banks of the Delaware, hourly menaced by the British

British troops cantoned in the neighbourhood. As the road held by General Lee was at a considerable distance from any of the Royal army's quarters, he thought himself fully secured from any danger on that side, and, of course, neglected to take those precautions which he would otherwise have done. The consequence was, that in crossing the upper part of New Jersey, from the North River, he took up his quarters at a house considerably removed from the main-body, where he remained with a slender guard. Colonel Harcourt happened at that time to be in the neighbourhood, with a detachment of light horse, that had been scouring the country, to obtain information, and to observe the motions of that body which was under the General's command. Whether it proceeded from attachment to Britain, or a hope of reward, a man acquainted the Colonel with General Lee's situation, and how easy it would be to seize and carry off his person without hindrance. Upon this intelligence, the Colonel hastened with all speed to the place where the General lay, and took his measures with so much dexterity, that the sentries posted about his quarters were secured without noise, the house forced open, and the General made prisoner. He was immediately mounted, and hurried away with all possible expedition, through a considerable extent of country, where a number of posts, well guarded, lay in the way of those who took him, but they found means to avoid, or to escape them, by the rapidity of their motion, and brought him safely to New York.

This capture of General Lee was a heavy loss to the Americans. His professional knowledge was great, and acquired by an experience accompanied with a perpetual study. He had contributed eminent-
ly to form the American troops; he was full of activity and resources, and of an undaunted and enterprising

terprising disposition. Such an officer was not easily to be replaced.

This event was productive, at the same time, of disagreeable consequences in other respects. A regulation for the exchange of prisoners had been settled between General Howe and General Washington. It had been duly observed hitherto; but there being no prisoner at present of equal rank with General Lee in the hands of the Provincials, it was proposed to deliver six field officers in exchange for him, as an adequate compensation for the difference of degree. Should this offer be refused, it was required that he should be treated suitably to his rank, until he could be exchanged upon a footing of personal equality.

The answer was, that General Lee had deserted from the British service, and could not be considered as a prisoner of war. He could not, therefore, claim the benefit of the regulation. This refusal occasioned much altercation. As General Lee had in the beginning of these troubles, resigned his half-pay as a British officer, it was insisted, that he could not, in common equity, be esteemed a deserter; and that no person being excepted in the regulation, he was entitled to it in the strictest justice.

The Americans expressed much resentment at the refusal to release General Lee. Several British officers, who were their prisoners, were treated with severity upon that account. The Congress renewed the declaration they had made precisely a twelve-month before, by which they threatened, that whatever punishment should be inflicted upon any persons in the power of their enemies, for favouring, aiding, or abetting the cause of American liberty, should be retaliated in the same kind, and the same degree, upon those in their own power who had favoured the cause of their enemies. They

now declared, in the same manner, that their future treatment of such officers of the British army as fell into their hands, should in every respect be regulated by that which General Lee experienced, and that their persons should be answerable in the utmost extent for any violence that was offered to him.

This declaration of the Congress was accompanied by several others equally bold and resolute; by which it was manifest, that the dangers with which they were at this time environed had not depressed their courage. The losses and defeats they had so repeatedly met with, had inclined many to think that they would relax of their inflexibility, and propose some terms of pacification. But they who had entertained such an opinion of them, were utterly deceived. Instead of betraying the least mark of despondency, their behaviour was full of undauntedness; they encouraged all men to persist resolutely in the measures they had embraced, and to admit of none that were not firm and spirited.

They exerted themselves in the mean time with indefatigable diligence to retrieve their losses, and to recover their army from that state of feebleness to which it had been reduced, by the necessity of complying with the requisitions of those people whose time of service was expired. They now were furnished with a just plea for altering their military plan in that particular. They had in almost an instant been deprived of their army; and from this untoward circumstance, the affairs of the public were thrown into the utmost confusion, and every body was alarmed for the safety of the state.

In order to obviate the fatal consequences that might ensue from the continuance of such a system, the Congress ordered a new army to be levied; of which the soldiers should be bound by the form of their enlistment, to serve three years, or during the

continuance of the war. This army was to consist of eighty-eight battalions, furnished in proportionable shares by each of the Colonies, and to be raised and supported at their expence. Great prudence and discretion were used upon this occasion, that no Colony should have reason to complain of being charged with any more than its due proportion.— Persons well informed of their comparative abilities, were employed in drawing up the scheme, by which they were to carry this measure into execution.— Virginia and Massachusetts were each assessed at fifteen battalions; Pennsylvania at twelve; North Carolina at nine; South Carolina at six; Connecticut at eight; Maryland the same; New Hampshire at three; Rhode Island at two; Delaware at one; and Georgia the same. The two Provinces of New York and Jersey, being partly in the enemy's possession, having greatly suffered already, and being liable to suffer still further from his incursions and depredations, were on that account highly favoured in this estimate, and rated at no more than four battalions each.

The most liberal encouragements were held out, in order to induce people to enlist. Twenty dollars were given as a bounty to every soldier that enlisted; besides an allotment of lands at the end of the war to all that survived, and to the families of those who should lose their lives in the service. In this re-partition of lands among the military, the republican carefulness to prevent too much inequality, was remarkably visible. The share of a soldier was one hundred acres; that of an ensign one hundred and fifty; a lieutenant two hundred; a captain three hundred; a major four hundred; a lieutenant-colonel four hundred and fifty; and the highest of any, that of a colonel, no more than five hundred. To those who engaged only for three years, no lands were assigned,

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An instance of care and foresight was manifested in the arrangement of this business, that reflected much credit upon those who conducted it.— In order to prevent the evil effects of that prodigal and careless disposition so common among soldiers, they were not permitted to alienate the lands designed for them during the course of the war. By these means, they would not, at its conclusion, find themselves in a state of indigence; and those individuals would be disappointed, who lie on the watch to make a profit of the thoughtlessness and indolence of others in pecuniary matters.

Previous to this new regulation, the Congress had ordained, as an encouragement and reward of military services, that all officers, soldiers, and seamen, disabled through wounds received in action, should enjoy during life, half of the pay to which their rank entitled them when the misfortune befel them.

This measure of distributing lands, as a recompence to the military, was designed as a counter-action to another of a similar kind on the part of Great Britain. Large grants of vacant lands were promised to those who acted with loyalty in the present dispute. But instead of producing any benefit, this measure had more powerfully contributed to increase resistance, and to augment animosity, than any other that had been adopted. Considering vacancy to mean forfeiture, the Americans made no doubt, that in case the British arms should prevail, their estates and possessions would be confiscated, and become the property of the victorious party, and that very little moderation would be shown, where such a number of claimants were to be rewarded,

In the mean time, the funds provided by each Colony respectively, being found inadequate to the support of so large a force as they were about to raise,

raise, and to the vast demands arising from so expensive a war, the Congress addressed themselves to the public for a loan of five millions of dollars, at the rate of four per cent. interest, for the reimbursement of which the United States became security.

During the prosecution of these measures, the situation of the Americans was becoming daily more critical. The British troops were at this time overrunning the Jerseys : they were masters of all the country in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, and occupied all the places of any consequence on the Delaware, which was the only boundary between them and that city.

In this extremity, the Congress thought it necessary to appeal to the inhabitants of the continent, in order to remind them of the engagements they had entered into for their mutual defence, and to summon them forth for the protection of the state in its present danger.

They represented to them the immediate necessity of concurring with speed and unanimity in the measures planned for the common safety. They recapitulated the grievances they had suffered, the contempt with which they had been treated, and the many other complaints, so often alledged by the people of America. No alternative remained but a manly resistance, or a spiritless submission. Nothing but an unconditional surrender would satisfy the pride of their enemies. It had been, to avoid so enormous an evil, that Congress had recurred to the Declaration of Independency, which alone could place them on a proper footing to withstand their enemies, and to procure them, in case of need, the assistance of friends. Their cause had prospered in a manner that had even outgone their expectations. The enemy had been foiled in a variety of attempts, from which they had entertained

no doubt of success, and had dearly paid for the advantages they had lately gained. But these had little solidity, and would not last, when once the Americans had reunited their now scattered forces. These, however, had not yielded to the foe ; their dispersion was occasioned merely from the shortness of the term of enlistment, and the punctuality with which the soldiers had been discharged at its expiration. This was the only cause of the distress to which the public was now reduced ; which, however, would speedily be remedied by the arrangements that were to take place in future. These would effectually prevent a repetition of the difficulties under which they now were labouring. They assured them, at the same time, that foreign states had already rendered them essential services, and had given them the most positive assurances of further aid. With such a prospect of assistance on the one hand, and of the miseries they would be subjected to, if the enemy was not resisted on the other, they would be shamefully wanting to themselves, if they did not combine their whole strength for the protection of so many valuable objects now at stake.

Such was the substance of the representation made by the Congress to the people of America. It produced accordingly the desired effects. They unanimously determined to exert themselves to the utmost in this season of universal danger, and to send whatever reinforcements could be raised, to join those forces that lay in the vicinity of Philadelphia. The protection of that rich and important city, now became the principal object of attention ; and it was resolved to leave nothing untried, to prevent it from falling into the possession of the British troops.

Exclusive of the natural dread of being exposed to the mercy of a victorious enemy, the Americans were at this juncture particularly apprehensive of the Hessians, and the other Germans in the pay of Great

Great Britain. Of all the measures that had been taken against them, that of hiring foreigners to invade their country, had given them the highest offence. British soldiers, though acting in the capacity of foes, still retained the feelings of countrymen, and would not shed their blood without some compunction. They were born and bred in a country noted for humanity, and the constitution of which inculcated mildness. But the Hessians were of a ferocious disposition ; educated under a despotic government, they knew no rights but those of force. Their manners were haughty and violent ; they carried destruction wherever they were masters, plundering all before them without distinction, and committing the most barbarous ravages.

They had, it was said, been told, before their departure from Germany, that they were to be put in possession of the lands of those whom they conquered ; and they were full of this expectation at their arrival. But upon discovering their mistake, they resolved however to make themselves amends by appropriating whatever they could lay their hands upon. In this manner they carried on a fierce and predatory war ; sparing nothing that came in their way, and behaving with a rapaciousness and insolence that rendered them deservedly objects of execration.

Such was the picture which the Americans drew of the Hessians. But they not only detested, they despised them equally, as base mercenaries, ready to commit murder, and to slaughter a people with whom they could have no pretence to quarrel, in obedience to a sovereign, who, like them, was influenced by no motive but that of pay.

The conduct of the Hessians was extremely offensive to the British commanders ; but they were too powerful a body to restrain by compulsion, as they composed almost one half of the army. Notwithstanding

withstanding the prudence and steadiness with which General Howe conducted himself upon this emergency, it was not possible to restrain their excesses, nor even to prevent them from spreading among the British troops, in a degree to which they would not have certainly been carried, had they not had such examples or a plea.

The depredations of the Hessians grew at last, it was said, so enormous, that the spoils they were loaded with became an absolute incumbrance to them; and a frequent impediment in the discharge of their military duties.

The desolation of the Jerseys was one of the consequences of this spirit of rapine. The Americans who adhered to Britain, attributed to it the subsequent decline of the British cause in those and other parts. As the devastation was extended indiscriminately to friend and foe, it equally exasperated both parties; it confirmed the enmity of the one, and raised up a new enemy in the other; and it injured the British interest in all the Colonies.

But, unhappily, the mischief was not confined to America. The accounts which were sent to Europe by the enemies of Britain, represented the behaviour of its troops in so scandalous a light, as could not fail to affect the character of the British nation. Doubtless these accounts were exaggerated; but they were not the less insisted upon by those to whom they were addressed; who, being the natural enemies of this country, would of course encourage every report injurious to its reputation. The French, who from the commencement of the contest, were the secret abettors of the Americans, openly countenanced all their accusations, and propagated them every where, in order to prejudice a people, against whom they were preparing to act avowedly an hostile part, after having long acted an insidious one.

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In the mean time, the approach of winter began to alarm the Americans for the safety of Congress. As the British troops lay cantoned on the banks of the Delaware, waiting the opportunity of a frost, to cross it without opposition, it was judged advisable for them to remove to Baltimore in Maryland, which lay at a considerable distance.

By their departure the city was thrown into the utmost confusion. The awe which their presence inspired, restrained that party which, though inimical to Britain, had opposed the declaration of independency. As it found itself unable, while alone, to resist the torrent of that superiority which supported the power of Congress, it now united with that party which was well affected to the cause of Britain.

The retreat of the Congress, the dissensions prevailing in the American metropolis, the successes of the British arms, and the danger they now threatened on every side, began to operate powerfully upon many individuals. The impression made upon some was such, that they left Philadelphia, and came over to the British quarters, to claim the benefits of submission.

Those who remained in that city, were so resolute in opposing the measures of Congress, that they forcibly prevented it from being put into a posture of defence, as it had been ordered. General Washington, upon information of these disturbances, was obliged to detach a considerable part of his small force, in order to quell it.

But though he succeeded in suppressing his opponents within, he was still in hourly apprehensions from the formidable enemy that threatened from without, and that was now stationed in such a manner, as indicated a fixed design to force a passage into Philadelphia, the moment the frost was set in.

In

In expectation of that opportunity, the British troops were placed in cantonments, extending from Brunswick on the Raritan, to the Delaware. They occupied a chain of towns and villages through the heart of the Jerseys; and had stretched their quarters along the latter river, into several places bordering upon Philadelphia.

Notwithstanding the severity of the season, General Washington determined to make some attempt on those quarters of the British army that lay nearest to that city, in hope of dislodging and constraining them to remove to a less alarming station. A body of Hessians lay at Trenton; another at Bordentown, some miles lower; and a third was posted at Burlington: these three towns were on the Delaware, the last within twenty miles of Philadelphia. Their late successes had inspired them with a presumption, and confidence in their military superiority, and a contempt of the Americans, that was by no means justifiable. They forgot the many causes that had contributed to the defeats of these; and were too ready to ascribe them entirely to their own valour. In consequence of this idea, they looked upon them as a people quite broken and conquered, from whom they had nothing henceforth to apprehend, and whom they might treat as they thought proper, without any danger of retaliation.

Full of these notions, they laid aside all carefulness and vigilance. They became inattentive to the motions of the Americans; and were wholly taken up with those licentious courses that had rendered them so odious. It was in a great measure owing to the hatred that was borne them on these accounts, that so much alacrity was shewn in concurring with the project that was forming against them. Private animosity was no less powerful upon this occasion than public spirit.

General

General Washington availed himself of this disposition, to execute the plan he had in view, which was to surprize them in their quarters, while they lay at a distance from each other. This was the only method remaining to attack them with any hope of success; as when united, their force was such, as to overwhelm the small numbers to which he was now reduced. Should he delay this attempt, they would undoubtedly collect their whole strength, the moment they found the Delaware was sufficiently frozen to afford them a passage. As this was daily expected, the intended attempt admitted of no procrastination. At all events it would prove of service, by obliging them to withdraw to more distant quarters, when they found themselves unsafe from the molestation of the enemy in those which they occupied: this would give time for the succours that were hastening from various quarters, to join him, and to compose a strength, which might enable him effectually to protect Philadelphia, and the Province of Pennsylvania, from the incursion that was projected against them.

A considerable proportion of the force which General Washington had under his command at this time, consisted of men drafted from the militia of Pennsylvania and Virginia: though new levies, they were expert in their exercise, and good marksmen. When incorporated with those who had remained with him, on the American army's late disbanding, and who were the best troops he had, they would, it was reasonably expected, become shortly no contemptible soldiers themselves, and fully supply the place of those who had left him. They had a powerful motive to stimulate them to exert themselves: the certainty, that were the enemy to penetrate into their country, they would shew it no more favour than they had done to those of which they had taken possession.

General Washington having assembled as considerable a force as he could collect in the vicinity, and as the expeditiousness with which he must act would permit, divided it into three bodies ; they were each to arrive at the place of appointment on the evening of the twenty-fifth of December. The first was to cross the Delaware at Trenton ferry, a little below the town ; the second somewhat lower than Bordentown ; the third division he commanded in person, accompanied by Generals Sullivan and Green. It consisted of near three thousand of the best men in the American service ; he had also a train of twenty field pieces. He marched at the head of his division to a ferry some miles above Trenton, with an intent to pass it at midnight ; which would enable him to arrive at Trenton by break of day, and surprize the enemy before they could make ready to receive him. But he was so retarded by the difficulty of breaking the ice, for the passage of the boats, that it was four in the morning before he could land his party on the opposite shore ; and when this had been effected, a heavy storm of snow and hail rendered the roads so slippery, that it was past eight o'clock before they reached the precincts of Trenton. The General had, upon landing, ordered a division of his men to take the lower road on the water side, while he proceeded with the other on the upper road, the more effectually to surround and cut off the retreat of the enemy.

Notwithstanding the retardments they met with, and that it was now broad day, the enemy did not discover them, till one of his detached posts was attacked by the General's division, and the out guards on the lower side of the town were attacked by the other. Assailed in this unexpected manner, Colonel Ralle, who was the commanding officer at Trenton, made every effort that could be expected from a veteran of great experience and bravery.

He formed his own regiment with the utmost celerity, and advanced at the head of it to support the party that had been first attacked; but it was now flying in such confusion, that it threw his regiment into disorder, and obliged it to retire into the town. They were rallied, and brought again to charge the enemy by Colonel Ralle; but on his receiving a mortal wound, he was compelled to quit the command, and his troops, dispirited by this accident, were broken after a short resistance, and their artillery seized. They were at last completely surrounded; and after making a fruitless endeavour to retreat, they were compelled to surrender.

The number of slain upon this occasion was not considerable on either side; but that of prisoners was near a thousand. None escaped but such as lay at a distance from the scene of action, in places further down the River. Had the two other divisions of General Washington's little army been able to cross the Delaware, as proposed, the whole corps stationed at Trenton, must unavoidably have fallen into his hands; but the ice had rendered the river impassable.

In consequence of not being joined by these two divisions, he repassed the Delaware. His own was too weak to maintain its ground against the force that would infallibly march out against him, on receiving intelligence of what had happened. A large body of the enemy lay in the neighbourhood of Trenton, and might in a few hours be assembled.

His return to Philadelphia, with such a considerable number of prisoners, was a circumstance the more pleasing, as it was totally unexpected. To surprize a body of veterans, and to defeat them in their own quarters, was an action that no people durst hope to see executed by troops so much inferior to them in military discipline and experience.

Such

Such as were religiously inclined, attributed this success to the interposition of Providence; which had purposely suffered America to be reduced to the lowest ebb of distress, in order to teach them not to rely so much upon their own strength, as on that of an all-ruling power. Those, on the other hand, who chose to account for events from natural causes, ascribed this surprising of the Hessians to the supineness of their conduct, in neglecting to keep a proper look out, and in holding their enemy in too much contempt, to imagine that they would have the boldness to conceive, and the ability to execute so hazardous an undertaking.

The success of this expedition, may be considered as one of the most favourable circumstances that befel the Americans in the whole course of the war. It happened at a time, when nothing less could have supported the least hope of their being able to extricate themselves from their embarrassments. Neither they, nor their enemies, imagined they could hold out many months; and multitudes were now preparing to make the best conditions they could with the conqueror.

The capture of these foreign mercenaries, who had done them so much mischief, and of whom they had stood so much in dread, gave a new turn to their disposition. It removed at once all the fears they were in for their favourite city: it taught them, that they had less to apprehend from these strangers, than from the British troops, over whom their only superiority was in the exercise of rapine. None of them had yet suffered themselves to be surprized in so careless and unsoldierlike a manner.

Such were the ideas and reflections of the Americans upon this occurrence. The report of it was soon spread with the utmost care and diligence throughout the continent, in order to animate the

people, and recall them from their late depression: It produced instantaneous effects in the parts adjacent to Philadelphia. Numbers of the most resolute and able bodied men in Pennsylvania, joined their countrymen who were already with General Washington; and they all behaved with particular bravery in the laborious operations that took place during the ensuing winter.

Nor were the contiguous Provinces deficient in their assistance upon this emergency. The criticalness of it was obvious to all the Provincial Assemblies, and they neglected nothing that could tend to so necessary a service as that in which their General was so deeply engaged. Those Provinces from which he derived the most effectual aid, were those of Virginia and Maryland: the first supplied him with a good body of rifle-men; the second, with some regiments composed of the best men that could be drafted from the regiments on their establishment.

The alarm and concern occasioned at New York by this affair, was equal to the surprize and indignation which was felt by the commander in chief. The chain of cantonments had been so disposed that nothing but an unpardonable negligence, could have exposed any of them to be insulted by the enemy with impunity. The advanced posts, especially, were so strong, and the communication between them so quick and easy, that the efforts of a broken and scattered enemy could not possibly have made any impression upon them, had they exerted the least vigilance.

This unfortunate affair was attended by further consequences, that proved very detrimental to the interest of Britain in America: it much diminished, if it did not entirely remove, the terror with which the provincials had hitherto beheld the Hessians; and what was, perhaps, no less prejudicial, it abated

ted the esteem which the British troops had conceived for them, and lessened the confidence with which they had been relied upon before.

The Americans began now to revive on every side. Reinforcements came in to General Washington from various parts, and he again found himself at the head of an army. He now repassed the Delaware, and took up his quarters at Trenton. Lord Cornwallis, who was purposing to return to England, was, upon this intelligence, obliged to hasten back to the Jerseys; and General Grant moved with all speed from Brunswick to Princeton, with all the troops that were stationed in those parts.

The Americans were strongly posted at Trenton Creek, the bridge in their front, with other passes well defended with cannon. Lord Cornwallis advanced upon them with all expeditiousness, intending to attack them before they had completed their works. Several skirmishes ensued, followed by a very severe cannonade on both sides; but the post had been so strengthened, that notwithstanding a very spirited attack, it could not be carried.

Darkness put an end to the engagement, which was intended to be renewed the next morning. But General Washington, whose intention it was to decline it, resolved, in the mean time, to make a second trial, in the nature of that wherein he had so well succeeded at Trenton.

A British brigade was stationed at Maidenhead, a town situated half way between Trenton and Princeton, where Colonel Mawhood lay with the seventeenth, fortieth, and fifty-fifth regiments. He had halted here in his march from Brunswick, and was to set out early the next morning. This body of men General Washington proposed to come upon by surprize, while at a distance from relief, hoping to capture them in the same manner as he had done the Hessians at Trenton.

To this intent it was necessary that he should deceive those who were encamped opposite to him, by seeming to remain in his own camp. The fires were kept up, parties left to go the rounds, and a detachment left to guard the bridge and the passes.— With the remainder he decamped in the profoundest silence, during the dead of night; and taking a large circuit, to avoid the brigade at Maidenhead, he fell in next morning with Colonel Mawhood, who had begun his march at break of day, and was advancing on the road to Maidenhead. The haziness of the weather, and the unevenness of the ground, prevented the Colonel from discovering the numbers of the enemy. Their van first attacked him, but this was easily repulsed; and he continued his march, not expecting farther molestation.

But General Washington having arranged his force so as to assail him on both sides, he was again furiously attacked, and shortly surrounded. He found, by the repeated discharges that were made where the fifty-fifth regiment was following him, that it was in the same situation.

On the clearing up of the fog, he perceived the great superiority of the force that encountered him, and that he was cut off from the other regiments.— Nothing could extricate him but the most desperate efforts; they were made accordingly: the regiment charged the enemy with their bayonets, and by dint of the most extraordinary valour, forced their way through them, and marched forwards to Maidenhead.

The fifty-fifth regiment behaved with no less resolution; finding it impracticable to join the seventeenth regiment with Colonel Mawhood, they retired in excellent order; and notwithstanding the violence with which they were attacked, they made good their retreat to Brunswick,

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The fortieth regiment, which had not begun its march when the two others were attacked, determined to fight its way back in the same manner as the fifty-fifth. It was assailed by the Americans with great impetuosity, and its fate remained some time undecided; but it was equally successful with the two others, and found means to retire with safety, and even with smaller loss.

In these three separate engagements, the British troops behaved with an intrepidity and a coolness of discipline, which excited the admiration, and even the praise of the Americans. Happening so close upon the affair of the Hessians at Trenton, it occasioned comparisons between their behaviour and that of the British troops, that were very unfavourable to the former. There was no occasion, the Americans said, of going to Germany in search of soldiers, at so enormous a price: experience showed that much better were to be found at home.

From this period, the Americans considered the Hessians as much less formidable than the British troops, and always expressed less apprehensions when any military operation was committed to them. They represented them as a heavy and tardy people, not deficient in courage and military patience and discipline, but wanting in diligence, and activity: they stood their ground, but their motions were of a nature that would rather prevent a defeat, than gain a victory.

Whether these representations were well or ill founded, certain it is, that an antipathy, mixed with contempt, prevailed among the Americans with respect of the Hessians: it lasted the whole war, and is not forgotten at this day.

Notwithstanding the American General miscarried in his original design, yet the spirit with which it had been attempted, and the bravery displayed

in the late conflicts by the American troops, did both him and them great honour. The difficulty of maintaining posts so far in the enemy's country, obliged the Royal army to retire from the banks of the Delaware, and to move towards Brunswick, in order to prevent it, with the troops and magazines lodged there, from falling into the power of the enemy. Lord Cornwallis made several motions to draw them to an engagement; but General Washington did not chuse to commit the advantages he had gained to the chance of a battle, which might in one day deprive him of what it had cost him many to obtain.

But while he declined an engagement, he was not the less active in recovering what had been lost in the Jerseys. Dividing his army into detachments, that could be re-united in a few hour's notice, he spread them, as it were, over the Province. As they met with every support and assistance which a people, irritated to the highest degree against a retreating enemy could afford to their deliverers, they quickly repossessed themselves of all the posts of importance in the interior parts of the country, and at last extended themselves to the very shores in sight of Staten Island. Here they posted themselves so advantageously, and fortified every place they had retaken so strongly, that considering the severity of the season, and the consequent difficulty of the service, it became impracticable to dislodge them at the present. The only places that remained in the possession of the British army in the whole Province of Jersey, were Amboy, situated on a neck of land at the mouth of the Rariton, and Brunswick, a little way higher on the same river. What prevented the enemy from seizing them, as he had done the rest, was that they were open to the shipping, and at hand to be immediately and effectually supported by the great force that lay at New York.

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The suddenness of this recovery of the American affairs from a state of so much distress, to such unlooked-for prosperity, was a matter of utter astonishment to all the world. In Britain it was presumed that the war was partly at an end, and that a few finishing strokes would terminate the business in the course of the next campaign. It was therefore with equal grief and astonishment they were informed that General Washington had extricated himself from the difficulties which it was firmly believed, he could not possibly surmount; that by his activity and dextrous management, he had compelled the British troops to withdraw from the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, and to evacuate the Province of Jersey; that he was in some respects become master of the field; and was again at the head of a formidable body of men, with which he made continual incursions into the country round the British quarters, and that these were so straitened, that they were obliged to be perpetually on their guard to prevent surprise.

Now it was, that people began to dismiss those sanguine expectations of a speedy reduction of America, which had been so predominant during the last campaign. The successes that had attended it had appeared so brilliant, and the termination of it so promising, that they had flattered themselves with the completest issue to the plan of conquest that had been adopted, and expressed much regret at its not having been prosecuted sooner. The dissolution of the American army was looked upon as an infallible proof that the Colonies were already weary of the contest, and desirous of giving it over. Ascribing it to other causes than the true one, they were persuaded that a deficiency of finances, and a general despondency had occasioned it; and that little or no resistance would henceforward be made. The warmth with which people had cherished these ideas, was not greater than the damp with which they were struck,

when

when they found how wrongly their notions had been founded.

Nor were the European nations less surprised at this unexpected intelligence from America. They had in a manner given up the hopes they had formed in favour of the Colonists. The maritime strength of Britain, the courage and superior discipline of her troops, the assistance of auxiliaries, deemed as brave a people as any in Germany, and whose chief profession is that of war, and, above all the prodigious resources of the British government; all these were motives that inclined multitudes to think that the Colonies would not be able to stand a long contest. Others, indeed, relying on the accounts given of the internal situation of the country, had conceived another opinion. They conjectured, that the many obstructions formed by the hand of Nature to military operations in America, would, of themselves, retard the progress of the British arms, and combat effectually for the Americans. But the transactions of the last campaign had staggered them, and they too began to coincide with the general persuasion, that America must at last submit to Britain.

Though their wishes continued as strong and fervent as ever on the side of America, yet their hopes were become very faint, when the news of the sudden success of General Washington arrived in Europe. No intelligence could be more welcome: they received it as if they had been as deeply concerned, and were to be as much benefited by it as the Americans themselves. It revived the drooping spirits of all the numerous enemies to Britain. Such as had doubted of the ability of the Colonies to resist her, now embraced the contrary belief; and such as had imagined from the natural impediments which would arise, that a subjugation of them was impracticable, were confirmed in their sentiments.

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All apprehensions vanished on account of America; and she was unanimously pronounced to be out of all danger with respect to Britain.

The name of General Washington now became famous over all Europe. The difficulties he had struggled with, the spirit and abilities he had manifested, his perseverance in the midst of so many discouragements, his patience under the most afflicting pressures, his vigilance in watching for opportunities to overcome them, his conduct in improving them to the utmost,—all these were just motives to place him in a most splendid and respectable light. He was every where extolled as the saviour of his country, and as an honour to that part of the world where he was born. America was compared to Rome, when driven to the last extremities by the victorious arms of Hannibal; and the appellation of Fabius, who rescued her from destruction, was now universally applied to General Washington.

In this general enthusiasm of the European nations in the cause of America, it was however allowed that no disgrace had befallen the armies of Britain. They had behaved upon every occasion with an intrepidity that was acknowledged even by their enemies. But it was evident that the local disadvantages against them were so many, that no generalship or valour could counteract them. The irregularity of the land, intersected by such variety of bars and impediments to military operations, formed, as it were, a perpetual chain of ramparts against all attacks: the means of defence were supplied by nature, and were too numerous and powerful to be overcome by the exertions of art.

Thus circumstanced, though neither skill nor bravery were wanting on the part of the British commanders and troops, still they were exercised in vain upon a country that slipped, as it were, through

through their hands, the moment they moved from one part of it, in order to secure another. It was experimentally found, that none but armies of the most prodigious magnitude would suffice for such a system of hostilities, as were indispensably necessary to make a successful impression upon America.— But had Britain been able to raise and transport such armies to America, they must have been famished for want of subsistence. It was with the utmost difficulty that provisions were procured for the British forces already there, and it would not be possible to support a larger number. The fertility of the country was no resource, as the inhabitants were masters of all its productions, and used all manner of care and industry to withhold them from, or to render them of no service to their aggressors. This was an obstacle which no allurements of gain would surmount. They had been tried, but the hatred and animosity of the natives had frustrated them, and had cut off every hope of succeeding by such methods. Those of force were the only that remained; but the blood that was shed to make them effectual, was a price that too frequently exceeded their value. Such were the allegations of numbers.

The Americans, it was said, possessed the genius and capacity of the European nations from which they were descended, together with the temper and disposition of the original natives of the continent which they inhabited. From the first they derived the strength of mind, vivacity of action, and the promptitude to learn and improve, which give the Europeans so decided a superiority over all other people: from the second, they acquired that patience and fortitude which so peculiarly characterise the American Indians. From these mixed qualities, arose a firmness in their resolutions, and a perseverance

verance in their undertakings, that rendered them a dangerous foe to encounter, to whatever straits they might be reduced.

Opposed in this incessant manner by every imaginable difficulty, the difference of a climate, wherein the weather is subject to such extremitieis of change, a country full of internal obstructions, and a people inflexibly bent to resist them to the last, and abounding in means to harass and perplex them in every shape, it was often said, the utmost that could be expected from the British troops in such a situation, would be to behave like men of courage, and to preserve their honour.

The manner of carrying on the war was perfectly suited to the character of the Americans; full of acuteness and circumspection, and fertile in contrivances and stratagems. Hence every post that was tenable, was fortified in the most judicious manner, and defended with equal obstinacy.— Instead of regular engagements, for which the enemy might have time to prepare, sudden encounters were sought, wherein, if they obtained no other advantage, they were sure of wasting the strength of the enemy, who must be recruited from an immense distance, while their loss would be supplied without delay. Depending upon surprises, they were indefatigable in exploring and making the best use of opportunities to that intent; this, of course, fatigued the attention of their antagonists, and kept them in continual alarms.

Representations of this kind took place equally abroad and at home. Here, indeed, the warmth of those who had avowedly disapproved of an American war, became notorious. They now insisted upon the rectitude of the many arguments they had alledged against it; all which, they now said, were verified by the fairest experience. They admonished those who were at the head of affairs, to desist from

from an enterprise, from which it had so often been predicted, and facts now made it evident, that no success could reasonably be expected. The calamities with which it had been accompanied were great, but they were nothing to those that would follow, if those who begun, still obstinately persisted in such ruinous measures. Before a trial of them had been made, they had justly been pronounced hazardous in the extreme; but now that their fatality was unquestionable, it would be unpardonable in men who pretended to have the public welfare at heart, to pursue them any longer.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIII.

Articles of Confederacy between the United Colonies.— Indians defeated by the Americans.—Winter Campaign in the Jerseys.

1776.

DURING the operations that were carried on by the British army under General Howe, and the American army under General Washington, the Congress determined to put the last hand to that system of confederacy, upon which the Colonies had established their union.

Articles of confederation had been entered into the preceding year; but they were temporary and conditional; and still supposed a reconciliation might take place between Great Britain and her Colonies,

But now that a determination had been solemnly embraced to renounce all dependance upon Great Britain, and to erect the Colonies into Free and Sovereign States, it became necessary to frame a settled and permanent form of union among them, abstracted from all ideas of any political connection with the parent state, that should imply subordination.

To this intent, another set of articles was drawn up by a committee of the Congress, appointed for that purpose. They underwent a long discussion, and were weighed, line after line, by the Congress itself, and were at length approved and resolved upon by all the delegates, who signed them in a solemn manner on the fourth of October.

In the former articles they called themselves the United Colonies ; but in the present instrument they took the title of the United States of America.

They contracted by the present constitution, a reciprocal treaty of union and friendship for their common defence, for the maintenance of their liberties, and for their general and mutual advantage ; obliging themselves to assist each other against any violence that might threaten all, or any of them, and to repel in common all the attacks that might be levelled against all, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, commerce, or under any other pretext whatever.

Each state reserved to itself alone the exclusive right of regulating its internal government, and of framing laws in all matters that were not included in the articles of the present confederation, and which could not any way be prejudicial to it.

No state in particular, was either to send or to receive embassies, enter into negotiations, contract engagements, form alliances, or conclude treaties with any king, prince, or power whatsoever, without the consent of the United States assembled in General Congress.

No person invested with any post whatever, under the authority of the United States, or of any of them, whether he had appointments belonging to his employment, or whether it should be a commission purely confidential, was allowed to accept of any presents, gratuities, emoluments, nor any offices, or titles of any kind whatever, from any kings, princes, or foreign powers.

Neither the General Assembly of the United States, nor any state in particular, was to confer any title of nobility.

The states were not to form alliances, or confederations, nor conclude any private treaty among themselves, without the consent of the United States

States assembled in General Congress, and without the intent and duration of that private convention being exactly specified in the consent.

No state was to lay on any impost, nor establish any duties whatever, the effect of which might alter directly or indirectly the clauses of the treaties that might hereafter be concluded by the Assembly of the United States, with any kings, princes, or powers.

No state, in particular, was to keep any ships of war above the number judged necessary by the Assembly of the United States, for the defence of that state and its commerce; and none of the states were to keep on foot, in time of peace, any troops above the number determined by the Assembly of the United States, to guard the strong places or forts necessary for the defence of that state. But each state was always to keep up a well disciplined militia, sufficiently armed and equipped, and was carefully to procure, and keep in constant readiness in the public magazines, a sufficient number of field pieces, and tents, with a proper quantity of ammunition and implements of war.

When any of the states raised troops for the common defence, all the officers of the rank of Colonel, and under, were to be appointed by the legislative body of the state where the troops were raised, or in such manner as that state should judge proper to regulate the nominations; and when any vacancy happened in these posts, it was to be filled up by that state.

All the expences of war, and all other disbursements to be made for the common defence of the general weal, and that were ordered by the Assembly of the United States, were to be paid out of the funds of a common treasury.

That common treasury was to be formed by the contribution of each of the states, in proportion to

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the number of inhabitants, of every age, sex, or quality, except the Indians exempt from taxes in each state; and in order to fix the quota of the contribution, every three years the inhabitants were to be numbered; in which enumeration the number of white people was to be distinguished, and that enumeration was to be sent to the Assembly of the United States.

The taxes appropriated to pay this quota, were to be raised and levied in the extent of each state, by the authority and order of its legislative body, within the time fixed by the Assembly of the United States.

Each of the states was to submit to the decision of the Assembly of the United States, in all matters or questions reserved to that Assembly by the present act of confederation.

No state was to engage in war without the consent of the United States assembled in Congress, except in case of actual invasion of some enemy, or from a certain knowledge of a resolution taken by some Indian nation, to attack them; and in that case only, in which the danger was too urgent to allow them time to consult the other states.

No particular state was to give any commission to vessels, or other ships of war, nor any letters of marque or reprisal, till after a declaration of war, made by the Assembly of the United States; and in that case they were to be granted only against the kingdom or power against which war should have been declared; and they were to conform respecting these objects, to the regulations made by the Assembly of the United States.

In order to watch over the general interest of the United States, and direct the general affairs, a certain number of Delegates was to be nominated every year, according to the form settled by the legislative body of each state, who were to sit at Philadelphia

delphia, until the General Assembly of the United States should order otherwise ; and the first Monday in November of each year, was to be the time fixed for their meeting.

Each of the states was to preserve the right and power to recall, at any time whatever of the year, their Delegates, or any one of them, and to send others in the room of them for the remainder of the year ; and each of the said states was to maintain their Delegates during the time of the General Assembly, and also during the time they were members of the council of state.

Each state was to have a vote for the decision of questions in the General Assembly.

The General Assembly of the United States, was alone and exclusively, to have the right and power to decide of peace and war ; to establish rules for judging, in all cases, the lawfulness of the prizes taken by sea or land ; and to determine the manner in which the prizes taken by the land or sea forces in the service of the United States, should be divided or employed ; to grant letters of marque or reprisal in time of peace ; to appoint tribunals to take cognizance of piracies, and all other capital crimes committed on the high seas ; to establish tribunals to receive appeals, and judge finally in all cases of prizes ; to send and receive ambassadors ; to negotiate and conclude treaties and alliances ; to decide all differences actually subsisting, and that might arise hereafter between any of the states, about limits, jurisdiction, or any other cause whatsoever ; to coin money, and fix its value and standard ; to fix the weights and measures throughout the whole extent of the United States ; to regulate commerce, and treat of all affairs with the Indians who were not members of any of the states ; to establish and regulate the posts from one state to another, throughout the whole extent of the

United States; and to receive, on the letters and packets sent by post, the necessary tax to defray the expence of that establishment; to appoint the general officers of the land forces in the service of the United States; to give commissions to the other officers appointed by each state; to appoint all the officers of marine in the service of the United States; to frame all the ordinances necessary for the government and discipline of the land and sea forces, and to direct their operations.

The General Assembly of the United States, was to be authorised to appoint a council of state, and such committees and civil officers as they shall judge necessary for guiding and dispatching the general affairs under their authority, while they remain sitting; and after their separation, under the authority of the council of state.

They were to chuse for president one of their members; and for secretary, the person whom they should judge fit for that place; and they were to adjourn at what time of the year, and to what place in the United States they might think proper.

They were to have the right and power to determine and fix the sums necessary to be raised, and the disbursements necessary to be made; to borrow money, and to create bills on the credit of the United States; to build and fit out fleets; to determine the number of troops to be raised, or kept in pay; and to require of each of the states, in order to compose the army, a contingent proportioned to the number of its white inhabitants: these requisitions of the General Assembly, were to be binding; and in consequence, the legislative body of each state, was to nominate the particular officers, levy the men, arm and equip them properly; and those officers and soldiers, thus armed and equipped, were to proceed to the place, and within the time fixed by the General Assembly.

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But if the General Assembly, from some particular circumstances, should think proper to exempt one or several of the states from raising troops, or to demand of them less than their contingent; or should, on the contrary, judge it convenient that one, or several others, should raise more than their contingent, the number extraordinarily demanded was to be raised, provided with officers, armed and equipped in the same manner as the contingent, unless the legislative body of that, or of those states to whom the requisition should have been made, should deem it dangerous for themselves to be drained of that number extraordinary, in which case they were to furnish no more than what they might think compatible with their safety.

The General Assembly was never to engage in any war, nor grant letters of marque or reprisal in time of peace, nor contract any treaties of alliance, or other conventions, except to make peace, nor coin money, or regulate its value, nor determine or fix the sums necessary to be raised, or the disbursements necessary to be made for the defence or advantage of the United States, or of any of them, nor create bills, or borrow money on the credit of the United States, nor dispose of any sums of money, nor resolve on the number of ships of war to be built, or purchased, nor on the number of troops to be raised for the land or sea service, but by the united consent of Nine of the States; and no question on any point whatsoever, except for adjourning from one day to another, shall be decided but by a majority of the United States.

No Delegate to be chosen for more than three years out of six.

No person invested with any employment whatsoever, in the extent of the United States, and receiving by virtue of that employment, either by himself, or by the hands of any other for him, any

salaries, wages, or emoluments whatever, could be chosen a Delegate.

The General Assembly was to publish every month, a journal of their sessions, except what related to treaties, alliances, or military operations, when it appeared to them that these matters ought to be kept secret. The opinions *pro* and *con.* of the Delegates of each state, were to be entered in the journals as often as any one of the Delegates should require it; and a copy of the journal was to be delivered to the Delegates of each state, on their demand, or even to any one of the Delegates of each state at his particular requisition, except of the parts above mentioned, to be carried to the legislative body of his respective state.

The council of state was to be composed of one Delegate of each of the states, nominated annually by the other Delegates of his respective state, and should these electors disagree, that Delegate shall be nominated by the General Assembly.

The council of state was to be authorised to receive and open all the letters addressed to the United States and answer them; but was not to contract any engagement binding to the United States: they were to correspond with the legislative body of each state, and with all persons employed under the authority of the United States, or of any of the particular legislative bodies; they were to address themselves to these legislative bodies, or to the officers to whom each state shall have intrusted the executive power, for aid and assistance of every kind, as occasion shall require; they were to give instructions to the generals, and direct the military operations by land or by sea; but without making any alterations in the objects or expeditions determined by the General Assembly, unless a change of circumstances intervening, and coming to their knowledge, since the breaking up of the Assembly, should

Should render a change of measures indispensably necessary ; they were to be careful of the defence and preservation of the fortresses and fortified posts ; to procure information of the situation and designs of the enemy ; to put into execution the plans and measures resolved upon by the General Assembly, by virtue of the powers with which they were invested by the present confederation ; they were to draw upon the treasurers for the sums, the destination of which had been settled by the General Assembly ; and for the payment of the contracts which they might have made by virtue of the powers granted to them ; they were to inspect and reprove, or even to suspend all officers civil or military, acting under the authority of the United States. In case of death or suspension of any officer, whose nomination belonged to the General Assembly, they might replace him by what person they should think proper, until the next Assembly ; they might publish and disperse authentic accounts of the military operations ; they might convene the General Assembly for a nearer term than that to which they had adjourned when they separated, if any important and unexpected event should require it for the welfare of the United States, or of any of them ; they were to prepare the matters to be submitted to the inspection of the General Assembly, and lay before them at the next sitting, all the letters or advices by them received, and to render an exact account of all that they had done in the interim ; they were to take for their secretary a person fit for that employment, who, before he entered on his function, should take an oath of secrecy and fidelity : the presence of seven members of the council was to empower them to act. In case of the death of one of their members, the council was to give notice of it to the colleagues of the deceased, that they might chuse one of themselves to replace him in

the council, until the holding of the next General Meeting ; and in case there should be but one of his colleagues living, the same notice should be given to him, that he might come and take his seat until the next sitting.

In case that Canada should be willing to accede to the present confederation, and come into all the measures of the United States, it was to be admitted into the union, and participate in all its benefits ; but no other Colony was to be admitted, without the consent of nine of the states.

The above articles were to be proposed to the legislative bodies of all the United States, to be examined by them ; and if approved of, they were to authorise their Delegates to ratify them in the General Assembly ; after which all the articles which constitute the present confederacy, were to be inviolably observed by all the United States, and the union to be established for ever.

No alteration was to be made hereafter in any of these articles, unless that alteration should be previously determined upon in the General Assembly, and confirmed afterwards by the legislative bodies of each of the United States.

Such was the tenour of the famous Treaty of Confederation and perpetual Union between the Thirteen Colonies. It followed at the distance of three months precisely, the no less celebrated declaration of Independency ; and like that, it was agreed upon at a time when their fate was yet in suspense. It may even be said, that this latter determination was adopted at a still more dangerous crisis than the preceding. Their armies had been repeatedly defeated, and were retreating every where before the enemy. So much resolution and constancy was an object of no small surprize in Europe. Their favourers compared their behaviour to that of the ancient Romans, when almost vanquished

quished by Pirrhus, and who, in the midst of the severest defeats and losses, never submitted to despondency, and still continued to bid him defiance.

It was not only with British troops and their European auxiliaries the Congress had now to contend; a domestic enemy had been excited to invade the territories of the Colonies, in a part which was considered as the least defensible.

The British agents among the Indians, had long exerted their endeavours to bring them into the contest, as allies to Britain. Through the vigilance and address of those who had been employed by the Congress to prevent such a measure from taking place, it had been reiterately defeated, and a plan of amity between the Indian nations and the Colonists had been settled upon terms equally acceptable to both. But notwithstanding these successive failures, the zeal and activity of the British agents did not abate. They were experimentally acquainted with the fickleness of these people, and with their readiness to concur in any enterprize from whence profit was to arise. By dint of seasonable presents, and by holding out to them the prospect of the immense booty that would fall into their possession, they induced them to take up arms in the cause of Britain.

In order to encourage them by the probability of success, they laid before them the scheme of action that was to be pursued upon this occasion. A considerable force was to be sent to West Florida, which was to march through the country of the Creeks, Chickesaws, and Cherokees. Strengthened by the warriors of those nations, this force was to fall upon Virginia and the Carolinas, and thus distract the attention of the Colonists, while the British armaments were invading the sea coasts.

But the Indians were not the only support relied upon in this undertaking. It was to be forwarded by the co-operation of others, in whom a still

greater

greater dependance might be placed. Circular letters were distributed among the well-affected to the British government in the back settlements, acquainting them with the preparations that were making against the Colonies, and exhorting them to second a design that seemed to promise the surest success. The other inhabitants in general were summoned to join the adherents to Britain, with promises of the kindest treatment in case of their compliance; but warning them at the same time, of the certain and inevitable miseries they would suffer, in case of a refusal. They were required to repair to the place where the royal standard was to be erected, together with their horses, their cattle, and as large a stock of provision as they could collect; for all which they should be generously paid. In the mean time, a subscription to a paper declaring their allegiance, was demanded, that it might be known who were the friends or the enemies to Britain.

Those who conducted this business, did it so effectually, that an extensive insurrection followed in consequence of it, among the Indians. Won by the plausibility of a plan that offered them such great advantages, they easily forgot the engagements they had formed with the Colonies, and entered heartily into a confederacy against them. Even their ancient friends, the Six Nations, swerved from their fidelity on this occasion; and numbers of them were induced, by the hopes of plunder, to join their enemies.

This Indian insurrection commenced among the Creeks, a fierce and rapacious people, whose hostilities were accompanied with those dreadful perpetrations of barbarity, that render an Indian war so terrible to all that are exposed to its consequences. In expectation of being powerfully seconded, they proceeded with great violence and impetuosity

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in their incursions; but finding themselves unsupported, and knowing that if they were left alone, they would quickly be overpowered, they held a consultation, wherein it was agreed among their Chiefs, to desist, and to apply for peace to those whom they had offended. It was fortunate for the Congress that this tribe had begun hostilities before they were joined by the others, and had for that reason deserted them: this assembly wisely dissembled the injury, and quickly concluded a treaty of peace with them.

Their neighbours, the Cherokees, having completed their preparations, sent a message to inform them, that they were marching against the enemy, and expected their assistance; but the Creeks returned them answer, that they had buried the hatchet so deep, that it could not be found. The Cherokees, however, proceeded without them, and invaded the back settlements in a variety of places, spreading massacre and desolation every where.

This barbarous incursion was not of long duration. The Colonies of Virginia and Carolina assembling a large body of militia, hastened with all speed to the relief of their countrymen. They attacked the Indians with great bravery, and defeated them in every encounter with prodigious slaughter. They drove them out of all the frontier settlements, and pursued them into their own country; where they destroyed all their habitations, and burned all their fields of corn and other provisions. The ruin and devastation was such, that the Cherokee nation was in a manner exterminated: what remained was glad to accept of any terms the Colonists thought proper to impose upon them.

A success so complete and decisive, put an end to all apprehensions from the other Indians. Dreading the fate of the Cherokees, they

continued quiet at home, and gave up all thoughts of the projected expedition. The cruelties that had been exercised by these savage warriors, gave such universal offence to all parties, that both the well and ill-affected to the British cause, concurred in expressing the utmost abhorrence of such a manner of carrying on hostilities, and in condemning those who had promoted this Indian invasion. The consequence was, that numbers of the adherents to Britain, determined to renounce all such measures in future; as experience had proved them to be fruitless, and as they were entirely repugnant to humanity.

This total deliverance from the fears which had so long alarmed the inhabitants of the interior and remote parts of the Colonies, was an event of the utmost consequence to the Americans. It answered two ends; it showed that the Indians were not so formidable as they had been represented, and that they might easily be repulsed; and it removed at the same time, all apprehensions that they might be aided by those among the Colonists who were disaffected to the measures of Congress.

This security to their back-settlements, was a circumstance the more desirable, as it enabled Congress to turn the whole of their attention to those operations that were immediately under their eye.— Had they been obliged to provide for the defence of those distant places, while they were so closely pressed by the British armies towards the close of the campaign, their distress might possibly have been too great to be remedied. But having now no internal foe to oppose, they were quite at liberty to improve those advantages which General Washington had gained towards the end of that year, and the commencement of the ensuing.

He was now busily employed in the Jerseys in harassing the out-posts of the British army, and preventing

venting supplies from coming to the forces at New York. The troops stationed on the Jersey coast underwent the severest duty; they were day and night constrained to keep an incessant look-out; skirmishes followed each other in perpetual succession: they were in the issue very destructive; for though few might fall at a time, yet the total amount of them that fell in so many, was very considerable. They bore their situation with great firmness and patience, and endured all the hardships of a long winter, increased by the fatigue of unceasing hostilities, with the same courage and fortitude as they had done at Boston a twelvemonth before.

But though they maintained the posts that remained to them in the Jerseys, they could not prevent the Americans from reaping the greatest benefit they could propose at this time. These continual encounters contributed to inure the Colonists to military discipline, and to prepare them for the operations of the next campaign, which General Washington reasonably imagined would be very extensive and important. To this purpose, he lost no opportunity of bringing the Americans to action as often as it could be done without risking too much. By this prudent management, he found them at the opening of the spring so much improved in the various branches of warfare, as to afford him a well-grounded expectation of being able to face the British armies, if not with success, at least in such a manner, as would not reflect disgrace upon America.

The resentment occasioned by the depredations that had been carried on in the Jerseys, had left few, if any, friends to Britain in that Province.—The dread of seeing those plunderers return, who had spared neither friend nor foe, rendered all parties averse to the cause in which they were employed. To this it was owing that their motions were observed with such extreme vigilance, that they stood

stood little or no chance of succeeding in any of their enterprises. So many had suffered through them, that there was no deficiency of spies to give instant information of whatever they were suspected to have in view; and as much mischief was done them by such as acted secretly from motives of private revenge, as by those who took an open part against them in the field.

C H A P. XXIV.

Distress of the West Indies—Losses by American Privateers—Attempt of John the Painter—Parliamentary Debates relating to America—State and Sentiments of the Nation.

1776.

IT had been frequently predicted, both in Parliament and elsewhere, that in case of hostilities with America, the West India islands would be involved in great distress. That prediction began now to be fulfilled in all its parts. From the deprivation of those numberless supplies with which they were furnished from the American continent, all the necessaries of life became so scarce, as to rise to four or five times their former price. The negroes, and the inferior classes of white people, suffered greatly on this occasion. Materials of indispensable use for the business of their plantations, were not to be procured at any rate, and a stagnation ensued that became a most serious object of alarm. Had it not been for the adventitious help that arose from the capture of American vessels, famine and absolute ruin, must inevitably have been the fate of the West India islands.

But if the Americans were losers in this respect, they made themselves amends by seizing numbers of the British ships home laden from those islands with rich cargoes. Herein they were favoured by a variety of circumstances, resulting from winds, weather, and seasons. An accident happened in particular during the course of this year, which proved highly detrimental to the mercantile interest of this country.

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The negroes in Jamaica had formed a conspiracy against the white inhabitants. As part of the military force usually stationed on that island had been drafted off to America, the few soldiers that remained were not sufficient to keep the negroes in awe. They had determined to rise upon their masters as soon as a large fleet of merchant-men was sailed that was then loading with sugars in the different ports of the island. Fortunately for the inhabitants, the plot was discovered and suppressed; but until the danger had entirely subsided, the fleet was detained, and did not depart until after the customary time. By this retardment, it sailed at a season that was accompanied with much tempestuous weather, which scattered the ships, separated them from their convoy, and exposed them to the American cruisers that were lying in wait for them in the latitudes through which they were to pass in their voyage homewards. Notice had been received in America of the detention of the merchant-men at Jamaica, and they had employed the time given them by this delay, in fitting out a large number of stout privateers to intercept them. The consequence was, that many of the ships composing this fleet were taken, and proved valuable prizes to the enemy.

The trade from the other islands suffered proportionably; and it was computed in London, at the close of the year seventy-six, that the losses of the merchants, and of government, by those vessels employed in its service as transports for troops, or stores, amounted to little less than eleven hundred thousand pounds.

The American privateers were at no loss where to dispose of these prizes. The ports of France and Spain, especially the first, were open to them both in Europe and in their American dominions. Here they sold them openly, without the least hindrance or controul. Such an indignity was not, however,

Ever, unnoticed by the British ministry: remonstrances were made to the respective Courts, which produced some restraint on these practices; but though they were publicly disavowed, they received all manner of private encouragement, and no effectual interruption was put to the sale of the many vessels belonging to Britain that were brought in by the Americans.

Had either France or Spain, or any power in Europe, acted in such a manner at any other time, they would soon have felt the resentment of this nation; but they knew its embarrassments; they saw that its situation would compel it to bear with such liberties as they were taking, and they continued them accordingly.

The behaviour of the French in their West India islands, was still more injurious and insulting than in France itself. They not only admitted the Americans openly into their ports, and purchased their prizes as fast as they could bring them in; they carried their audaciousness so far, as to fit out privateers under American colours, and to take commissions from the Congress, in order to cover their depredations upon the British shipping in those seas.

The captures made, on the other hand, on the Americans, by the ships and armed vessels of the British navy, were very numerous; but they did not counterbalance the value of those which the Americans made on Great Britain: as they were chiefly laden with provisions, and articles for the trade of the West Indies, they proved however highly useful to the British islands, where they always found a ready sale.

But it was not only the permission or connivance of the French and Spanish ministry at this encouragement of American privateers, that gave just cause of alarm to that of Britain. The ports

of both kingdoms were full of such indications as denoted that objects of far higher and more dangerous importance were in agitation. An altercation subsisted between Spain and Portugal: but it was evident to all discerning people, that something more was meant than a quarrel with that Crown by the vast armaments that were carried on by the House of Bourbon. The compact that had been framed between the different branches of that potent family, was present to the mind of all those who reflected on the opportunity that was now given to it, by the dissention between Great Britain and her Colonies, to depress that power of which it stood so much in awe, and of which it had lately experienced the strength in so many parts of the world.

In the midst of the solicitude which the naval preparations of these two great monarchies occasioned in all thinking men, the attention of the public was called forth by one of those strange events that are sometimes produced by seasons of general turbulence and fermentation.

A man of an extraordinary turn of mind, arrived in the course of this year from America. He was a native of Britain:—Impelled by an unsettled, restless disposition, his whole life had been a perpetual scene of rambling from one country to another, without fixing any where for a constancy. The viciousness of his character engaged him in a variety of such adventures as men given to profligacy seem to delight in. Leading a vagabond, irregular life, he had gone through many changes and vicissitudes. He had enlisted several times as a soldier, and had as often deserted, after receiving the bounty money. He had, as opportunities offered, been successively a highway-man, a house-breaker, and a robber in every shape and form. He also worked occasionally at his trade, which was that of a painter. Having committed a number of misdeeds,

deeds; for which, if detected, he was conscious that his punishment would be fatal, he thought it prudent to abandon his native country, and transport himself to America. Here he remained about three years, rambling from Colony to Colony, and supporting himself by his trade. As his adventures were known only to himself, he met with a friendly treatment among a people, who before the unhappy quarrel with Britain, made it a duty to receive the natives of this island with kindness and hospitality. This quarrel was at that time beginning to be serious, and took up the attention and conversation of all people. It was principally among those of his own degree, that the conduct of the British government was condemned in the most outrageous manner. By frequenting and conversing with men of this description, he gradually imbibed their opinions, and conceived an aversion to this country and nation, that increased to the highest degree of inveteracy and violence. In the warmth and impetuosity of a fearless and enterprising temper, he was continually brooding on the means of wreaking his vengeance upon a people and kingdom he held in so much abhorrence. He projected at last the most daring plan that ever entered into the conception of a political enthusiast,—that of contriving and effecting, alone and unassisted, the complete subversion of the power of Great Britain.

Fraught with a project that involved at once the total annihilation of the strength of this realm, and the deliverance of America from all its attempts to subdue it, he again crossed the ocean to this island, without communicating his intentions to any one.—It was by this deep reserve, and averseness to mix with associates, that he had formerly preserved himself from discovery in the perpetration of his wickedness. He determined therefore to act upon the

same plan in the execution of the enterprise he was labouring to compaſs.

He neglected nothing which could in any manner prove subservient to it. It was indeed of such a nature, as required the utmost boldness, perseverance, and industry of which human nature is capable. These qualities he exerted in the supremest degree upon this occasion, and carried them all to an extent that was truly astonishing.

His deſign was no less than to destroy the whole navy, together with the commercial greatness of Britain. In order to accomplish this end, his intent was to set fire to the King's dock-yards, and afterwards to the principal sea-ports and trading towns in the kingdom.

Full of this destructive ſcheme, he visited and inspected with the keenest attention and vigilance, those docks and places at which his attempts were chiefly to be aimed. He ſtrictly examined their ſituation and circumstances, and especially the degree of care and watchfulness that was beſtowed upon them by thoſe who were appointed to their guard. This he acknowledged, upon his trial, to have found ſcandalouſly deficient, and inadequate to ſo great a trust, and ſuch as afforded him the highest encouragement to proceed in his undertaking.

In the mean time, he was indefatigable in deviſing and preparing implements and materials for the execution of his purposes. His inventive genius contrived ſeveral of a very ſingular and extraordinary nature, and his whole time was taken up in making trials of their efficacy.

After failing in ſeveral attempts, he at laſt found means to ſet fire to the Rope-houſe at Portſmouth; hoping from the combustible articles with which it was filled, that the conflagration would be ſo violent as to extend to the adjoining magazines and store-

store-houses, and thus complete, at one stroke, the ruin of the first arsenal in the kingdom.

The fire was however happily extinguished by the dexterity and diligence with which it was encountered; but not without having entirely consumed all the hemp and cordage contained in the Rope-house; a great, but comparatively small loss, when the danger is considered, to which the immense value of the prodigious quantity of naval stores lodged in the contiguous buildings was exposed, together with their very narrow escape.

But though the loss upon this occasion was not difficult to repair in such a country as England, the dread and apprehension excited by so daring an attempt, were not easily removed. An alarm was spread over the nation, that plots and machinations were forming against it of the most insidious and basest nature; and that should open and avowed hostilities fail, clandestine measures would be employed against it of such a kind, as no care nor circumspection would be able to defeat. As no discovery could be made of the author of the mischief done at Portsmouth, it was accounted for, in the mean while, by various conjectures. It was attributed by numbers to incendiaries hired from abroad; some suspected France or Spain; others charged it to America; nobody imagined that meer political enthusiasm, uninfluenced by the prospect of reward, would spontaneously have ventured upon so desperate an undertaking.

The perpetrator of this deed was now at Plymouth, watching an opportunity of repeating what he had done at Portsmouth. But the intelligence of what had happened at this place, had set people upon their guard; and in making an attempt on the dock, he was near being discovered.

Despairing of success in either of these places, he next projected to burn the shipping in some of

the mercantile sea-ports. Here he expected to find men less apprehensive of such a design, and therefore less watchful. To this intent he proceeded to Bristol, where the party that sided with the measures that were now prosecuting against the Colonies, had lately procured an address of congratulation to the Throne upon the successes of the late campaign in America.

This was a powerful motive to inflame the mind of so resolute and vindictive a man. He arrived at Bristol in January seventy-seven, and directly began with an attempt to set fire to the shipping, of which the crowded situation in the narrow gut that runs along the key, and is almost dry at low water, exposes them to the most imminent danger in such cases. Failing in several endeavours upon those vessels, he next determined to make an essay upon the warehouses lying near them, in hopes that the flames would spread on both sides, and destroy both the city and shipping. No more, however, than six or seven were consumed.

The terrors of the public were renewed upon this occasion, and the rage of party was added to them. The enemies of the Americans ascribed these mischiefs to their favourers; and these retorted the accusation, and represented them as proceeding from their own machinations, in order to have a pretence to blacken those who opposed their iniquitous measures.

In this manner did individuals of narrow conceptions and violent tempers, labour to defame each other reciprocally; while the more cool and temperate of both parties suspended their opinions, and were struck with amazement and doubt, whence so unprecedented and unaccountable, and at the same time so persevering a system of iniquity could proceed.

It was happily at last brought to a conclusion by a seizure of the offender, who some time after leaving

ing Bristol, in quest of further adventures of the same sort, was taken up, on suspicion. He behaved, upon examination, with a coolness and assurance that almost disconcerted those who were authorised to inquire into his conduct. He avoided with surprising art, every captious question; nor when he was brought before the Lords of the Admiralty, did his undauntedness fail him; he answered every question with the same guardedness, and remained equally calm and unperplexed.

Means, however, were found to bring him to detection.—A man of the same profession, who had also lived in America, or was an American, visited him in prison, and pretended much concern and sorrow at his situation. He strongly affected to be no less attached to the cause of America than the prisoner himself, and as ready to engage in any undertaking to serve that country. An intimacy being thus produced between them, the first was at length induced to disclose himself. Evidence being obtained in this manner, he was brought to his trial at Portsmouth, where he maintained his character to the last, rejecting and invalidating the testimony of his false friend, from the baseness and treachery of his behaviour. He received his condemnation to death with great composure, and met his fate with a fortitude worthy of a better cause than that for which he suffered. When at the point of execution, he acknowledged his guilt; and as an atonement for it, he left some directions how to prevent the dock-yards, and other public magazines, from being attempted after the like manner in future.

Such was the destiny of this wicked, but extraordinary man. His real name was James Atken; but he was much better known by that of John the Painter. He was perhaps the most singular phenomenon to which the tempestuousness of the times gave birth. The boldness and magnitude of his enterprize

terprise, the motives that produced it, which though erroneous and unjustifiable, were not mean, the resolution and industry with which it was conducted, the toils, difficulties, and hardships, with which an individual in low circumstances, must have constantly struggled in his labours to accomplish it: all these considerations render it, though highly atrocious and criminal, no less an object of astonishment than execration.

The ideas of the danger with which Great Britain was menaced, both from within, as well as from without, received an additional weight from this event. Ministry had already begun to put the nation in a stronger state of defence than had hitherto been thought necessary. Sixteen ships of the line had been added to those already in commission; and other preparations made, that manifested suspicions of unfriendly designs from abroad.

In the mean time, the session of Parliament was opened on the last day of October. In 1776. the speech delivered from the Throne, it was represented, among other particulars, that the people of America had not only renounced their allegiance to the Crown, and their political connection with this country, but rejected, with circumstances of indignity and insult, the means of conciliation held out to them by the commission sent out for that purpose. That if their resistance continued unsuppressed, much mischief would ensue to the commerce of Great Britain, and to the political system of Europe. That no people ever enjoyed more happiness, and lived under a milder government than the Colonists in America. Their improvements in every art, their numbers, their wealth, their strength by sea and land, now unhappily exerted against the parent state, were ample proofs of the prosperity to which they had attained,

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The address of the House of Commons, in answer to the speech, after coinciding with the declarations it contained, attributed the circumstances of insult and indignity, which accompanied the rejection of the conciliatory offers made by the commissioners to the Americans, to their resentment of the firm and constant adherence of the Crown to the maintenance of the constitutional rights of Parliament, divested of every possible view of any separate interest; and it expressed accordingly, the strongest sentiments of gratitude for this marked attachment to the Parliamentary authority of Great Britain.

This address produced, however, great debates, and met with a determined opposition from the minority. An amendment was moved by Lord John Cavendish, which was the most remarkable of any that had yet been proposed since the commencement of the troubles, for the freedom and pointedness with which it was expressed. It entered into a comprehensive view of the conduct of the British ministry respecting America. It lamented that the minds of so large, and lately so loyal a part of the King's subjects, should be entirely alienated from this country. Such an event, it was asserted, as the defection of a whole people, could not have happened without some considerable errors in the conduct observed towards them by government. It reprobated, in the most explicit terms, the late measures and proceedings of the ministry respecting the Colonies; it reproached them with the pursuit of schemes formed for the reduction and chastisement of a party, supposed to consist of some inconsiderable and factious men, but which had, in the issue, driven thirteen large Colonies into an open and armed resistance. Every act of Parliament, proposed as a means of procuring peace and submission, had proved, on the contrary, a new cause of opposition

dition and hostility. The nation was now almost intricably involved in a bloody and expensive civil war, which threatened to exhaust the strength of the British dominions, and to lay them open to the most deplorable calamities. No hearing had been granted to the reiterated petitions of the Colonies, nor any ground laid for a reconciliation; the commissioners nominated for the purpose of restoring peace, not being furnished with sufficient powers to bring about so desirable an end.

After a variety of other observations, it concluded with a declaration peculiarly spirited and striking.—“ We should look,” said it, “ with the utmost shame and horror, upon any events that would tend to break the spirit of any part of the British nation, and to bow them to an abject, unconditional submission to any power whatsoever, to annihilate their liberties, and to subdue them to servile principles and passive habits, by the force of foreign mercenary arms, because amidst the excesses and abuses which have happened, we must respect the spirit and principles operating in these commotions. Our wish is to regulate, not to destroy them; for though differing in some circumstances, those very principles evidently bear so exact an analogy with those which support the most valuable part of our own constitution, that it is impossible, with any appearance of justice, to think of wholly extirpating them by the sword, in any part of the British dominions, without admitting consequences, and establishing precedents the most dangerous to the liberties of this kingdom.”

The opposition in the House of Lords was no less animated.—The speech underwent a severe examination, and the debates were carried on with a warmth and freedom of expression seldom preceded.

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" The Ministry asserted in that speech," said they, " that the people of America were oppressed by the arbitrary government of their leaders.— But who were those rulers whom they so passively obeyed? They had not any nobles among them; they were notoriously averse to titular pre-eminence; they had in their articles of confederation, guarded with particular care against the future creation of nobility; their great men were such merely by the sufferance of the people, and the least deviation from the duty they owed to the public, would divest them in a moment of all popularity, and all power.— They were, it was true, an improved and polished people; but they were too clear-sighted and sagacious, to admit of any distinctions that would subject them to the controul of chieftains. They lived throughout the continent on a footing of equality, that extinguished every spark of ambition in those who might be inclined to aspire, from the impracticability of succeeding in any views of this kind.— Commerce had enriched them, and the country contained many men of substance and property, but none were so superior in opulence to the rest, as to become through such means objects of any magnitude. The circumstances of the wealthiest among them were but moderate, when compared with the prodigious fortunes of some individuals in this country. The fact was, that from the general diffusion of industry, they were nearly upon a level; and that such among them who made the greatest figure, did it more by the esteem in which they were held, and the respect that was shown to them on account of their merit, than by the influence of their wealth, or the splendor of their manner of living.

The Continental Congress had chosen Mr. Hancock their President; but would any one assert that his opulence had raised him to that dignity? He was a gentleman

gentleman of great worth and integrity in the commercial line ; was known to be free from ambition, and to harbour no other designs, but such as were perfectly consistent with the welfare of the community. His zeal, indeed, for the honour and interest of his country, was notorious ; and he had given signal proofs of it in several instances : it was this, and this only, abstracted from all other considerations, that had placed him in the seat which he now occupied. He had no authority at Boston, and possessed no influence over his countrymen, till the present disputes had brought him into notice, from his opposition to the British ministry : had not this been the case, he would have remained unnoticed, and passed his life in the shade, like all other persons in that country, who did not acquire the favour of the public by rendering it services. These alone, in America, entitled men to super-eminence and conspicuity.

The case of General Washington was a clear proof that merit was the only motive that influenced the Americans in the choice of their chiefs. He was appointed to the command of their armies solely on account of his military abilities ; there was neither favour nor bribery used in his promotion : he was chosen a deputy to Congress by the people of the district where he lived, from the good will and respect which the worthiness of his character had procured him. Being a man of courage and experience in war, the Congress nominated him, as the fittest person they knew for the station he now filled with so much reputation. Previous to this unhappy dispute, he was a private gentleman possessed of a handsome patrimony ; but his mind was much more liberal than his fortune : his generous and hospitable behaviour had recommended him to public notice, much more than his affluence. Had this been his only distinction, he would have attained neither greatness

greatness nor fame among his countrymen ; and would have remained in obscurity like many others, that had no other claim to their predilection.

Those who composed the Congress, were not the richest men in the land. Their capacity and their resolution had dictated the propriety of electing them. They held their authority from the good opinion of the people ; the republican ideas prevailing in America, allowed them no other right to rule. It was absurd, therefore, to assert that the Americans were now become slavish and submissive : such a sudden change could not be supposed in men, who were known to be staunch levellers, and declared enemies of all personal prerogatives ; who thought and acted with more freedom and independency of judgment, than any civilized people whatever ; who were more jealous of their liberties than any other nation ; and who, in defence of their rights, had taken up arms, and were now inspired with a determination to sacrifice all that was dear to them, rather than submit to demands that were contrary to their inclinations.

Such a race of men were not to be made tools of by a few designing individuals. The truth was, the whole continent had unanimously disapproved the conduct of the British administration ; and when it was found, that it persisted in measures opposite to their requests, and that no expostulations would prevail, the Colonies had associated to oppose these measures ; and had, like all other people in the same circumstances, been compelled to chuse directors for the supreme management of their affairs. But could a direction of this nature imply tyranny ? Their leaders were appointed by the people at large, chosen annually, and responsible to a public that continually watched all their proceedings, and would withdraw its confidence the moment it saw the least cause. With what face could ministers

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put such assertions into a speech, that ought to contain nothing but the strictest and most unquestionable truth?

What were the terms of conciliation offered to the Americans? Forgiveness upon unconditional submission. Did ministers seriously imagine the Americans would accept of such terms? Could they doubt an instant, that they would be refused with indignation, and that such a treatment would necessarily produce resistance? This, in the necessary course of things, must be followed with a determination to shake off the yoke of a power, from which they had nothing further to expect but enmity.

It had been asserted, that no people enjoyed greater happiness, and lived under a milder government than the British Colonies; their prosperity, and the strength to which they had attained, were instanced as proofs. The assertion was true; but militated against those who made it. Why did they force so rich and powerful a part of the British empire to sever itself from the parent state, at a time when unanimity and good understanding were so necessary, to enable this country to face the potent enemies, who were secretly watching for opportunities to despoil it of its power? The noble fabric of British grandeur, erected by the wisdom of our forefathers, and so long preserved by their prudence and valour, was on the point of irretrievably falling to pieces, by the incapacity, the rashness, the obstinacy of individuals, whom warnings of every kind could not admonish, nor even reiterated experience induce to desist from measures that were evidently pregnant with destruction?

What could ministers mean by assurances of friendly and pacific sentiments from abroad? Poor politicians must they be, who depended upon such assurances, in the best of times, from those quarters

ters whence they now came. Old grudges were not so easily forgotten ; and this nation had every thing to apprehend from those to whom it had done so much mischief in the last war. Resentment and ambition went hand in hand upon this occasion, and would not lose so fair an opportunity of revenge, as that which was opened by this fatal quarrel between Great Britain and her Colonies. The preparations of those powers who spoke so friendly a language, were no secret ; their partiality to the Americans shewed their intentions to this country ; their encouragement to the privateers that were capturing the British merchantmen, was a sufficient earnest of the designs that were uppermost in their councils, and was but a prelude to what we were to expect, as soon as circumstances had brought their plans to maturity.

To ask for unanimity, after plunging the nation into such calamities, was the highest insult to a sensible people. Unanimity was the result of good conduct and success ; but not of imprudence and malversation : it implied confidence and esteem ; but who could give them to men who had forfeited both ; who had crushed all reasoning by dint of numbers, and derided sagacity and foresight itself, when pointing to the unhappy events it had predicted ? The assertions of that minority which administration affected to contemn, had been fatally too prophetic. The Colonies had resisted ; they had declared themselves Independent ; they were secretly, and would soon be openly assisted by our enemies : all this had been foretold ; and all this had happened : minority would now venture to make one more assertion, which was, that America was lost for ever.

One method only remained to extricate this country from the difficulties wherein it was involved, and to prevent still greater. This was, to recall our

our armies from America, and to repeal all the acts obnoxious to that people. This, perhaps, might induce them to a re-union; but should they refuse to return any more to a state of subordination to Britain, still it were wiser to acknowledge their independency, and to unite with them upon a footing of parity, than to continue shedding their blood, together with our own, to no other purpose, than to satiate a base and unprofitable resentment.

A war with the whole House of Bourbon, and perhaps with other powers, would be the inevitable consequence of continuing hostilities in America; but such a war at present, would no longer resemble those we had formerly waged with the Princes of that family. Powerful as they were at that time, they would still be much more formidable now that the strength of America would be thrown into their scale. It was a sorrowful, but a true reflection, that one half of the British nation, was become an instrument in the hands of our natural enemies, with which most effectually to distress the other.

Impelled by these cogent reasons, it was the duty of every man who felt them, to oppose an address approving of measures which must, if persisted in, terminate in calamities, that would give such deadly wounds to Britain, as might prove incurable, and bring her to such a state of debility, as would, from one of the first powers in the world, reduce her to hold but a secondary rank among the European nations.

The address was justified on the other side in all its parts, as founded upon equity, prudence, and spirit. Nothing was recommended by it, that tended to oppress the Americans: no more was to be required of them than a return to the same obedience, which every other British subject was bound to pay. Was it, in the mean time, consistent with the wisdom, in which this nation so justly prided itself,

self, to throw away the fruits of the infinite cares and expences it had bestowed upon the Colonies, while any hope remained of reclaiming them from their defection? To give them up, would be to resign the wealth, the strength, and the importance of Great Britain: they were evidently at stake in the present contest: were the issue of it contrary to what was hoped by all well wishers to their country, its fall and degradation would be the necessary consequence.

It was equally repugnant to that idea of courage, so much boasted of in the British nation, to be terrified out of their rights by threats, or by resistance. The first was unworthy of their notice; and the second it became them to overcome by that valour, which had so long been the dread of their enemies. The question was now, who should be masters of America; whether Britain, that had founded, nurtured, and protected its Colonies there, during the space of near two centuries, should still retain them; or whether those Colonies, now arrived at maturity, should spurn at the hand that had raised them, and plunge the dagger into the bosom of their parent state? Would any one that was not an enthusiast in republican principles, and an advocate of political licentiousness, deny this to be a fair statement of the question?

There was a morality in public, as well as in private transactions. Nations were bound to each other by ties of gratitude, no less than individuals; and when they swerved from their duty, were equally deserving of censure. The frequent breach of this duty, did not diminish its heinousness: it was indeed become so common, that unreflecting people thought it hardly merited notice, and claimed, as it were, a sort of ~~their~~ allowance from the generality of its practice. But such people ought to be told, that neither habit nor prescription can give a

sanc*tion to iniquity.* The more common the crime, the greater the scandal. Nations ought no more to be exempted from condemnation, when they deviate from rectitude, than the most obscure individuals.

Upon this principle the inhabitants of the Colonies were guilty of great undutifulness and ingratitude, in denying the request of their parent state, to assist her in the difficulties she had incurred on the joint account of both. To say that the monopoly of their trade was a sufficient compensation for what she had done on their behalf, was a fallacious assertion: they were a part of the empire, and ought, in justice, to contribute to the utmost of their abilities to its common exigencies, as well as this country. But this they most certainly had not done. While pressures of every kind fell upon the inhabitants of Britain, those of the Colonies enjoyed an ease and prosperity, such as no people on earth had ever been recorded to have experienced. Severe indigence was the lot of multitudes in this island, the poor's rate bore ample testimony of what numbers were in want; but the Americans knew no distresses of this kind; they were well housed, well fed, and well clad; and whoever was industrious, was sure to lead a comfortable life.

This was an unanswerable proof, that the people of Britain exerted themselves much more for the common good of the empire, than those of her Colonies. It was therefore a reasonable argument in favour of the demands, made by the British legislature upon the Colonies. Their refusal was not founded upon equitable motives. The internal felicity and opulence of which they were possessed, manifested a much greater ability to bear additional taxes, than the comparative circumstances of individuals in Britain; and it is evident, that the same principles which regulate the publick debts of the United Kingdom, regulate the debts of the Colonies.

But the season for arguing was over ; the Americans had bid us defiance, and were become our enemies ; the sword was therefore to decide : it was now to be seen, whether we could reduce them to obedience by superior force. Were this to fail, it would be vain to try any other expedient. They were experimentally found to be ungovernable but through fear. Lenity and forbearance had been tried to no effect ; and had only prompted them to rise in their audaciousness, and to assume the stile of dictators in their correspondence with government. It had been carried on indeed under the title of humble remonstrances and petitions ; but these could not conceal the haughtiness and obstinacy of their dispositions, nor the determination that was apparent through all their pretences of attachment, to render Britain subservient to their own conveniency, and to consult her interests no further, than they could be made conducive to their own, exclusively of all considerations of the far heavier weight of burthens and expences borne by Britain, for the defence and protection of the whole empire.

It was yet time to assert our national dignity and supremacy ; we were in full strength and vigour ; the resources of this country, though they had been tried to a great extent, were far from exhausted. They could not be employed upon a more critical and necessary occasion than the present.

Ministry had a right to demand unanimity, and to call upon opposition to desist from thwarting the measures that were pursuing against America. Whatever truth had been contained in some of their predictions, they had erred egregiously in the principal point of the dispute, by denying the intention of the Colonies to cast off the sovereignty of this country. It was incumbent upon all good subjects, after such a proof of insincerity, to place no further confidence in the protestations, of whatever kind,

that might come from America. While they continued to resist on the footing of subjects contending for their rights, people might be excused for pleading in their favour; but they had now forfeited all right to patronage in this country; and to espouse their cause at present, could hardly be considered in any other light than that of disaffection and disloyalty.

It was base and insidious to represent the circumstances of the nation as deplorable and desperate. Such ideas could only inculcate despondency, which ought not to be admitted at the worst of times: men of true spirit would preserve hope in the midst of adversity; and real friends to their country, would never encourage despair; but the test of patriotism in those who patronised the Americans, seemed of late to consist in representing Britain as at the lowest ebb.

The successes of the last campaign in America, afforded a well-grounded prospect of settling affairs to our satisfaction. A spirited prosecution of the business in hand, would speedily conclude it. None but enemies to their country, would throw any obstacles in the way of so desirable an object, as that of humbling her foes, whether they dwelt in Europe or on the continent of America; whether they were foreign nations, long used to rivalship and enmity, or a people sprung from the same origin as ourselves, and emboldened by that flourishing situation in which we had placed them, to make the first essay of their strength upon those from whom it was derived.

Much was threatened from abroad, and great terrors held out, that occasion would be taken from these unhappy broils, to do Great Britain irreparable damage, either by fomenting them, or by attacking us in the absence of our fleets and armies. But the prudence of government had fully obviated these objections.

objection off. A sufficient force was preparing to face all dangers at home; and the prosperity of our arms abroad had, it was well known, cast a damp on all the partisans of the Americans throughout Europe. However well they might wish them, the most inveterate of our foes would not venture to engage in so distant a quarrel, until they saw better signs of its terminating to the advantage of our opponents.

We were now in the career of victory; it would betray weakness and imbecility to be driven out of it by mere apprehensions. The object in pursuit was of such consequence, that we could not desert it either in honour or interest. It was the preservation of those possessions, on which so great a proportion of our commerce and our strength was founded. We should not therefore relinquish them until every effort had been made to retain them:—To act otherwise would justly subject us to the imputation of a heartless and pusillanimous people. If it were to be our misfortune to lose these valuable dominions, still we ought not to put it in the power of our enemies to say, that we lost them for want of courage to defend them.

What countenance could we bring to a treaty of accommodation with the Americans, the very moment, as it were, after they had done us the greatest injury they were able? Had a treaty been advisable before, it was no longer practicable at present, unless we meant to condescend to the lowest degree of humiliation. But the preservation of our honour was of more importance than even that of America. Admitting that we had acted erroneously in our former proceedings with the Colonies, their present behaviour counterbalanced all the grievances of which they complained. At all events we had a clear right to make good our claims to the participation of those benefits, the prospect of enjoying which,

had induced us, in common with so many other nations, to found colonies in this newly discovered part of the world.

The people at large were now greatly alienated from the Americans: however they might once have been inclined to favour them, they were full of resentment at their late conduct. The declaration of Independency had entirely altered their opinion of the Colonists; and they were heartily disposed to concur in any measures in order to compel them to submission.

With so many reasonable motives, to persist in the determination to reduce the Colonies to obedience, it was but just to approve of an address that recommended it. The general sense of the nation coincided with the opinion of the majority in Parliament upon this occasion: and an unanimity of this nature had always been considered as a proof of rectitude in the conduct adopted by ministry.

The conclusion of these debates was, that the address was carried in the House of Lords by ninety-one votes to twenty-six; and in the House of Commons by two hundred and thirty-two to eighty-three.

Various, in the mean time, were the sentiments and dispositions of people relating to the situation of public affairs. Though a majority assented to the propriety of compulsive measures in America, yet their approbation was not given with that warmth and fervour which usually accompanies a declaration of hostilities against the known and long avowed enemies of this country. The idea of that object for which they were to contend, was not sufficiently powerful to awaken much resentment. The vast distance of the scene of action, and the remoteness of immediate peril, rendered people less attentive to the transactions that were taking place, and less alarmed.

alarmed at their consequences than their real importance required a reflecting nation to have been.

Those who chiefly interested themselves in the business, were such as hoped for large contributions from America, to alleviate the public burthens at home. These were the most numerous. This being a clear and distinct idea, obtained of course the most extensive influence. Others again were actuated by motives of zeal for the glory of the nation, which they thought would suffer a diminution by yielding in a contest with its Colonies. There were also great numbers who profest themselves unable to decide which of the two contestants, Britain or America, were most justifiable in their respective pretensions. These observed a kind of neutrality, and seemed to be totally indifferent about the success of either party.

Nor should it be forgotten, that the spirit of dissipation, and the eagerness in the pursuit of pleasure which had for some years so strongly characterised the nation, operated at this period in a marked and striking manner. So violent was this propensity, that nothing but amusement was allowed of in company, among many of the politest classes; and that politics especially were excluded from all genteel conversation.

Among persons of this description it was universally remarked, that a passive acquiescence in the views and measures of administration, was the reigning maxim. But as it arose from no other motive than the fear of being interrupted in their favourite pursuits by party disquisitions, they seemed in general to be little affected by the good or ill fortune of either side.

That division of the people which espoused the cause of the Americans, was incomparably more animated than any other. They had from the beginning of the contest acquired this character, and

they continued to preserve it. They dreaded the success of ministerial measures in America, from an apprehension of the danger that would result from it to the liberties of this country. In this persuasion, they were indefatigable in representing every where the necessity of putting an end to the dispute. They considered it as ruinous in every shape : should the British arms prevail, though this might redound to the reputation of Britain, it would eventually, by a chain of causes not difficult to unfold, occasion, in all likelihood, the loss of freedom. Should America, on the contrary, be successful, the dignity of Britain would be hurt, and its lustre tarnished among the nations. The dilemma was equally perplexing either way, and the only expedient to avoid it, was a reconciliation with America, founded upon terms of reciprocal equality, before the operations of war had decided the superiority in the field. Such were the sentiments and wishes of a considerable part of the nation.

C H A P. XXV.

Parliamentary Transactions relating to America.

1776—1777.

SHORTLY after the meeting of Parliament, a motion was made in the House of Commons by Lord John Cavendish, for a revisal of all those acts by which the Colonies thought themselves aggrieved.

The reason he alledged for making this motion was, that such a revisal would come very effectually in aid of the proclamation issued by the commissioners in America, by which the people in the Colonies were given to understand, that the Crown would concur in such a measure.

It was necessary, he observed, that Parliament should as speedily as possible confirm this declaration. Whatever proposals were made to the Americans on the part of administration, they would not be credited without this additional sanction. It would remove all mistrust, and establish that confidence, without which no negociation could proceed. If it was therefore seriously meant to fulfill the purposes of the declaration, ministry ought chearfully to concur in this motion.

It was however opposed with great warmth.—The arguments alledged against it were, that to take up such a discussion at the present, might embarrass the commissioners, and impede a negociation that was perhaps commenced, and already in some forwardness. If they had begun, they ought to be left to conclude it. Being on the spot, they were best judges how to conduct a treaty with the Colonists,

nists, and what concessions might be granted or withheld.

In the sequel of the debate occasioned by this motion, it was asserted by ministry, that until the Congress had rescinded the declaration of independency, no treaty could be entered into with America.

Such an assertion was violently censured by opposition. It was no less than a denunciation of war, and all its calamities, unless the Americans implicitly admitted the principal point now in litigation, without any preliminary stipulation.

The most haughty and arbitrary Princes had condescended to treat with their revolted subjects, notwithstanding they had renounced their allegiance. Philip the Second of Spain, treated with the people of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, after they had abjured his authority, and declared themselves independent : he was not above making proposals to them, and promising to restore them to all their rights.

Instances of the same kind might be adduced from all histories : our own afforded enough to show the impropriety and rashness of such an assertion, which was utterly inconsistent with sound policy, and tended to produce the most fatal consequences.

Other reasonings were also adduced in support of the motion ; but it was nevertheless rejected by a majority of one hundred and nine, to forty-seven.

This rejection exasperated the minority to a violent degree. They now seemed to have formed a determination to drop entirely the contest with ministry upon all questions relating to America. They avowedly withdrew whenever any were proposed, and from this period left the House to the full and undisturbed possession of the majority.

In order to justify this secession, it was alledged that an attendance in the House upon these matters,

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was ineffectual and nugatory ; the weight of numbers was irresistible, and baffled all arguments. It was a degrading office always to contend with a certainty of being defeated. Discussion was vain where people's votes were pre-determined. There was a time when reasoning was listened to, and had its due influence ; but as experience had shown that time was no more, it was wiser to acquiesce in silence, than to undergo the fatigue of a fruitless opposition. They had for years laboured to convince their opponents of the dangers into which they were about to precipitate this country ; but finding it impossible to stem the torrent of a deluded multitude, they would desist for the present, and wait with patience until the phrenzy of the day had subsided, and people were brought to a cool consideration of things, either through their own timely reflection, or the conviction enforced upon them by disagreeable events.

The season was not yet come for the nation to be undeceived. It was the interest of so many to continue the deception, that it would last till an accumulation of calamities had oppressed the public to such a degree, as to be felt by all degrees. Until then, individuals seemed too generally disposed to submit to ministerial influence, and to grasp at those benefits which were held out to those who could further the designs of men in power. The times were so degenerate, that no man could have an opinion of his own with safety to his interest or pretensions in public affairs. The venality so much complained of in former days, was an object of no consideration, when compared to its present increase. It was then temporary and occasional, but it was now reduced into system ; it prevailed all ranks and professions. Means were found to make them all subservient to the purposes of ministry ; such amazing numbers were benefited by their measures, that till defeats,

defeats, disappointments, and losses of every kind, had disabled them from pursuing their schemes any longer, they were sure of a ready support from those whom they employed in their execution.

For these reasons, minority judged it necessary to refuse their presence to transactions which they disapproved, and could not hinder. They would reserve themselves for a more probable opportunity of being able to do service to their country. When they perceived that adversity had, as usual, opened the eyes of men, they would then come forth again, and endeavour, if possible, to remedy the evils which it was not now in their power to prevent.— Such was the apology made by the minority for their secession.

The strength of ministry was now become so decisive, that whatever was proposed, was immediately approved of, and carried without any opposition or debate. Never had those at the helm met with more accord and acquiescence in the most successful æras.

The number of seamen was now increased to forty-five thousand for the ensuing year; and the expence of the navy amounted to four millions two hundred and ten thousand pounds, including the ordinary, the building and repairing of ships, and a million that was voted to discharge the debt of the navy.

The expences of the land service were not less enormous: their amount was near three millions, exclusive of the extraordinaries of the preceding year, which exceeded twelve hundred thousand pounds, besides new contracts for additional troops from Germany, together with the half-pay list, and the pensioners of Chelsea.

A bill was also passed for granting commissions to fit out private ships against the Americans. This was followed by another to empower the Crown to secure such persons as were accused, or suspected.

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of high treason, committed either in America or at sea. By the provisions of this bill, they were liable to be detained in custody without bail or trial, while the law continued in force: it was reserved to the Privy Council only to admit them to either.

This bill, however, did not pass without opposition and severe animadversion. It was contended that no legitimate or obvious reason subsisted for investing the Crown with so unusual a power.—There was no rebellion, either existing or apprehended, in any part of Britain or of Ireland. Such an extraordinary measure could only be tolerated in cases of great domestic danger, when the realm or constitution were immediately threatened; but neither of these could be pleaded in the present instance. The coercive measures already taken against the Americans, were amply sufficient, without any further addition; and the safety of the kingdom was amply provided for by the vast force by sea and land now in commission, and the readiness with which a now well regulated militia could be called forth.

The operations of this bill were of an alarming nature. It would augment the animosity of the Americans, and excite them to retaliate, by adopting measures of the like nature. This would embitter the minds of both parties, already exasperated in a high degree. It would increase the rage with which hostilities were exercised, and render men implacable on either side. .

A variety of other arguments were alledged against the bill, the tendency of which was to show the danger arising from it to the liberty of the subject.

The reply of ministry was, that all these allegations were the effect of groundless discontent, and of a determination to oppose every measure of government, however prudent and well-founded. The end of the bill could evidently be no other than to seize and

it was open and direct bribery ; it gave ministry an opportunity of purchasing votes in that House to an alarming extent ; as every time a new contract became necessary, the great profits resulting from it, excited the avidity of new competitors, and laid them open to ministerial influence in a manner equally undeniable and scandalous. This was one of the consequences of the American war, and none of the least pernicious, as it had created a new fund wherewith to corrupt the representatives of the people.

But exclusive of this evil, it produced another no less detrimental in its effects to the pecuniary interest of the public, than detrimental to its morals. It not only subjected the member thus bribed to the minister's command, but it reciprocally laid the minister himself under the necessity of conniving at the malversation of the person whose adherence to his measures he had purchased. What was this but a mutual toleration of iniquity on both sides ? the more offensive, as it was carried on in the face of day, and in defiance, as it were, of that integrity, which ought, at least, to subsist in appearance, if not in reality, among individuals who pretended to claim the respect and esteem of their constituents, as well as their obedience.

To this it was replied, that no particular preference had been given to any member of that House merely upon that account, in the making of contracts. Agreements of this nature had invariably been made with persons whose line of life rendered them most proper to be trusted with the business assigned to them, and most likely to fulfil their obligations. As the wisdom of the nation had judged fit to admit men of mercantile education and business into that house, there could be no impropriety in applying to them in such cases, as soon as to any others. Their probity was not the less from their having

a seat in Parliament; and they were as much entitled to benefit by their profession as other individuals.

Every contract had been conducted with as much caution and economy on the side of government, as was compatible with the diligence and exertions exacted from those who were employed. The most advantageous terms had been insisted upon, and obtained, that could possibly be devised or expected. Every individual's circumstances had been duly weighed, and his responsibility and character duly ascertained, previous to his being trusted. If any deficiencies had happened, they were owing to unavoidable accidents, and to such fortuitous causes as could neither be foreseen nor obviated in the ordinary course of things.

It was equally unjust and absurd, to charge the employing of members of Parliament in the quality of contractors, to the necessity of procuring abettors of the American war. Ministry was supported by a majority that needed no allurements of that sort to preserve its superiority over opposition. The number of those who approved of that measure, exclusive of those gentlemen who were possessed of contracts, was sufficient to constitute an incomparable majority. Had even those gentlemen, instead of adhering to government, formed a part of the minority, they were so few, that little strength would have accrued from their addition to it. But it was now become the maxim of opposition to attribute whatever was unfortunate or blameable, to the plans that did not coincide with their opinions.—But whatever epithets they might affix to the conduct of ministry, such as were discreet and circumspect in delivering their judgment, would suspend it, till events more conclusive than those to which minority were so often appealing, had decided whose conduct was most deserving of approbation,

This debate on contracts, and contractors, ended for a while the Parliamentary discussions relating to America. It was not till towards the close of the session, that an effort was again attempted to bring about a reconciliation between Great Britain and her Colonies.

His advanced age, and infirm state of health, had of late prevented the Earl of Chatham from taking an active part in the disputes that were agitating both Houses of Parliament. He viewed with an unfeigned concern, the dangers that threatened a kingdom, the councils of which he had once directed with so much success and glory. He determined again to come forth from his retreat, and endeavour, weak and debilitated as he was, to influence by the powers of his eloquence, and the still greater weight of his character, the contending parties to drop their animosity, and listen to terms of accommodation. The failure of his former attempts did not discourage him; though he knew, experimentally, the obstructions that he should have to contend with, yet the firmness of his disposition was proof against them all.

He repaired to the House of Lords on the thirtieth of May, and in the strongest and most 1777. pathetic terms, moved for an address to the Throne, to represent the deep regret and sorrow with which they beheld the distracted situation of the once flourishing and triumphant empire of Britain, but now menaced with impending ruin, from the continuation of the unnatural war with her Colonies; to advise that speedy and effectual measures should be taken for putting a stop to such fatal hostilities, upon the only just and solid foundation, a removal of grievances, and to signify their readiness and desire to concur in that necessary work with all cheerfulness and dispatch, as the only means of regaining the affections of the British Colonies, and
of

securing to Great Britain the commercial advantages of those valuable possessions. To heal and to redress, would be more consistent with the dignity and majesty of the Royal character, and more prevalent over the minds of a free people, than the rigour of chastisement, and the horrors of war, which hitherto had only served to sharpen the resentment, and consolidate the union of the Colonists against the British nation, and if continued, must end in a total and final dissolution of all ties between them.

He then entered into an explanation of the intent of his motion, which was to repeal all the obnoxious acts relating to America, passed since the last peace, and to confirm to them especially the right of disposing of their own money. This, he said, was coming to the point specifically; such an explicit concession was a herald of peace, and would open the way for treating. Though much would remain to be settled, yet a preliminary of this kind would be such an earnest of the sincerity and good disposition of Parliament, as would remove the principal impediments to an accommodation, and accelerate the conclusion of it without further repugnance or difficulty.

He insisted with great earnestness, upon the necessity of adopting the measure he proposed without delay. The present situation of Great Britain exposed her to the most imminent danger from the House of Bourbon: a few weeks might decide our fate as a nation; a treaty between France and the Americans would be that final decision; we should not only lose the immense advantages which we had derived from the vast and increasing trade of our Colonies, but that commerce, and all those advantages, would be thrown into the hands of our natural and hereditary enemies.

After stating several particulars to show the impracticability of reducing America by force of arms,

and the pernicious consequences of such a conquest, were it practicable ; and describing the difficulties and distresses which had been brought upon the public, by engaging in hostilities, he concluded by saying, that “ America was contending with Great Britain under the masked battery of France, which would open upon this country as soon as she perceived that we were sufficiently weakened for her purpose, and found herself duly prepared for war.”

Lord Chatham’s motion was seconded with much eloquence and energy by several of the other Lords in the opposition. It was no less vigorously resisted by those on the side of administration. The principal argument they employed, was, that America from the commencement of the dispute, had taken a settled resolution to conclude it by a total renunciation of this country’s authority. It was a design long premeditated. If the present causes of altercation had not arisen, other pretexts would have been found to quarrel with Great Britain. There was no reason to doubt they had been excited to act in the manner they had done, by the enemies of this nation, with a view to embroil and keep us occupied at home, while they were left at leisure to pursue their schemes without molestation on our part.

Such a determination in the Colonists being once admitted, as it was certainly apparent from every circumstance attending the contest, it would be no less unavailing than unworthy of the character of a magnanimous people, to make concessions that would only produce further demands. But it was nugatory at present to be making any proffers ; none would be accepted, until the arms of Britain had humbled their pride : that was the most effectual preliminary to a peace : until the Colonies were convinced that they should not be able to make good their independency, they would maintain it. Nothing, therefore, ought to divert the attention of Britain

Britain from the measures she had embraced : to them alone she must now trust, for a recovery of the Colonies ; and the only question at this day was, whether the strength of Britain was adequate to the end proposed : the persuasion being for the affirmative, she could not consistently with her dignity, any more than with her interest, avoid making a trial. She was called out to the field, and could not refuse coming forth, without suffering disgrace, and losing her reputation, which was the greatest of all losses.

Whatever dangers might hereafter arise in the course of this quarrel, it still behoved us to proceed with what we had begun. Dangers were the concomitants of all spirited proceedings : It was the knowledge of, and the determination to face them, wherein true spirit consisted. We were engaged, it was true, in a perilous contest ; but it was now safer to go forwards than to recede : by the first, we stood a chance of succeeding ; but by the second we tamely gave up every thing ; which was a behaviour that would deservedly subject us to contempt, and expose us to greater insults and dangers than those we were shrinking from through ill-timed caution, or rather through a fruitless pusillanimity.

Various other arguments were urged on either side ; when, after an animated and interesting debate, the question being put, Lord Chatham's motion was rejected upon a division, by a majority of ninety-nine to twenty-eight. This concluded all debates relating to the affairs of America, during the present sessions.

C H A P. XXVI.

Military operations in America.

1777.

ON the opening of the spring, the British troops in America began to entertain hopes of prosecuting their operations with more success, as they certainly would with less hardships and suffering than they had endured during the winter, when the rigour of the climate combated against them, and was an effectual impediment to all attempts upon the enemy.

The persecution, to which the well effected to the British government had been subjected throughout the Colonies, had compelled great numbers to fly for refuge to the army at New York. They consisted not only of Americans, but of those natives of Britain and Ireland who had settled in that continent previous to the present troubles, and whose attachment to their country would not permit them to yield obedience to the Congress.

In order to render them as useful as possible, at a time when no resource was to be neglected, such of them as were inclined to bear arms, met with every suitable encouragement. They contributed to recruit those regiments which wanted their complement; and a very considerable corps was formed of them; which gradually augmented to some thousands: they were officered by those gentlemen who had been obliged to abandon their homes and property, for their adherence to the cause of Britain.

They were placed upon the same footing as the troops on the British establishment; they were paid, clad,

clad, and subsisted, and received every other advantage to which the others were entitled. Several good purposes were answered by this measure: it relieved from distress such as were entitled to expect assistance. Instead of an incumbrance, they became serviceable in the cause for which they had suffered; it opened a prospect of deriving further aid to it from the additional numbers, whom the outrageousness of party would expel from the different Colonies; and it pointed out a place where those who were desirous of obtaining revenge for the ill treatment they had received, would be duly encouraged, and amply furnished with the means of seeking it.

These people being thus embodied, were put under the command of Governor Tryon, in quality of General of the King's Provincial troops, by whom they were so well disciplined, and exercised with so much industry and diligence, that they became in a short time of the highest utility. They replaced the regulars in all the posts that required to be guarded, and acquitted themselves completely in all the duties of a garrison, though they were not yet sufficiently experienced to be brought into the field. This was the first measure of importance, adopted previous to the subsequent campaign by General, now Sir William Howe; who had lately been decorated with the order of the Bath, for his services during the last campaign.

The Americans had, during the winter, erected mills, and collected large magazines, in a mountainous part of the Province of New York, called Courtland Manor. Its proximity to the present seat of war, added to the natural strength of its situation, rendered it very convenient for that purpose. As it lay on the eastern borders of the North River, it commanded an easy communication on both sides. Immense quantities of provisions and

stores had been deposited there, as a place of the greatest safety, and which a very little defence could render inaccessible.

Peek's Kill, a place on the North River, at about fifty miles distance from New York, was the principal post of communication between the American army and its magazines. A plan was formed to surprise this place; by which an entrance might be secured to the upper country, and their deposits seized or destroyed. This was the only method of coming at them; an open attack was impracticable from the difficulty of the ground, and the facility with which the enemy could have removed them had they perceived such a design.

Colonel Bird, a bold and active officer, was placed March 23, at the head of this expedition. He 1777. embarked with about five hundred men under the protection of a frigate and some armed vessels. On the discovery of his approach, the enemy not thinking the place they were in tenable against his force, and seeing from the quickness of his motions that nothing could be moved off, retreated to a strong pass, two miles distant, after setting fire to the buildings, where the stores and provisions had been laid up in readiness to be conveyed to their army.

The troops landed without opposition; but found, upon reconnoitring the enemy, that the pass he had seized, commanded the entrance into the mountains so effectually, that it could not possibly be forced. They returned to their vessels, after destroying all that was on shore, as well as a number of boats belonging to the provincials, that had been just laden with provisions, and were on the point of departure on their arrival.

As the quantity of stores destroyed at Peek's Kill was not so considerable as it was expected they would have been found, further attempts were projected

jected to penetrate into those parts where they were deposited. Intelligence was brought that large quantities were laid up at Danbury, and other towns and villages in the Province of Connecticut, bordering upon Courtland Manor.

Another expedition was hereupon proposed for the purpose of destroying them, the command of which was given to Governor Tryon, whose activity and diligence had been chiefly instrumental in procuring the intelligence. He was assisted on this occasion by General Agnew, and Sir William Erskine, two brave and expert officers, and a body of two thousand men were appointed to this service.

They embarked at New York, and crossing the Sound between Long Island and Connecticut, they landed at Norwalk, a place in that Province twenty miles from Danbury, the object of their destination. As that part of the country had no suspicion of any attack, it was wholly unprepared for defence, and the troops received no molestation in their march to Danbury, where they arrived on the twenty-sixth of April. But they had not been there many hours, before they were apprized that numbers of the Provincials were gathering on every side, and that they would shortly be surrounded if they made any stay. This rendered it necessary to use the utmost dispatch in the execution of their intent. They accordingly set fire to the store-houses and magazines. Unhappily they could not prevent the flames from communicating to the town of Danbury, which was entirely consumed,

After performing this service, they set out next morning for Ridgefield, in the midway between Danbury and the place where their shipping lay : but the enemy did not suffer them to retreat unmolested. Generals Wooster, Arnold, and Silliman, happened to be in the neighbourhood. Upon intelligence of a party of British troops being landed, they exerted themselves

themselves with so much diligence, that a considerable body of the militia and Minute-men were collected in a few hours. At the head of these they determined to throw themselves in the way of the British troops, and interrupt their march, till sufficient reinforcements arrived to cut off their retreat.

In order to effect this design, General Wooster followed them close in their rear, harassing and obliging them frequently to face about to repel him. General Arnold, proposed, on the other hand, to post himself at Ridgefield, through which the British party was obliged to pass, intending here to make a vigorous stand, till further assistance could arrive. To this purpose he marched across the country with all speed, and reached the town of Ridgefield before the British troops could come up with him.

In the mean time the provincials under General Wooster pressed them on every side, making the most of every advantageous position they could seize, and disputing the ground upon every opportunity. In this manner they greatly retarded the march of the British troops, and obliged them to proceed with the utmost regularity and circumspection. Notwithstanding they were guarded on each of their flanks, as well as in their rear, with field pieces, that did no small execution, yet the provincials continued to gall them with their musketry without cessation.

Arriving at Ridgefield, they found a new enemy to encounter. General Arnold had so well improved the short space of time since he had taken possession of the ground, which was not a full hour, as to have thrown up some works, behind which his men were advantageously posted, and made a heavy fire on the British troops as they were advancing; but they were attacked with such vigour, that they gave

gave way on all sides ; not, however, till after making a resolute defence. General Arnold behaved on this occasion with remarkable intrepidity : his horse was shot under him, and a grenadier was coming up to pierce him with his bayonet, as he lay on the ground ; but he recovered himself with great agility, and shot the grenadier dead upon his approach.

The British troops having made themselves masters of Ridgefield, halted there in the night, and resumed their march next morning. But the enemy was now strongly reinforced ; and had seized every spot of ground on the road, that could be disputed with advantage. The whole day was spent by the Royalists in forcing their way through a number of difficulties. It was evening before they reached a rising ground within gun-shot of their shipping. Here they formed in order of battle, and on the enemy's preparing to renew their attack, they charged them with their bayonets so suddenly, and with so much fury, that they were entirely broken, and obliged to retire at a distance in order to recover themselves. This gave an opportunity to the troops of reimbarking without further hindrance.

It was time to provide for their safety by retreating : their ammunition was totally expended ; it consisted of sixty rounds a man on their setting out ; from whence may be inferred the wariness and activity of the service they were employed upon. The loss on their side in killed and wounded did not exceed one hundred and seventy ; but that of the provincials was much greater. Their principal loss was that of General Wooster, a brave and experienced old officer. He had served in the last and preceding wars, and had signalized himself on several occasions. He behaved upon this with extraordinary valour. Though in his seventieth year, he acted with all the fire of youth, and headed every

every charge that was made upon the British rear, till he was mortally wounded. Several other persons of note among the provincials fell on this day. The number of gentlemen that served as volunteers among them on this emergency, was very considerable; and they exerted themselves with the more zeal and bravery, as many of the militia were new levies, who had seen little or no service, and required their example to encourage them.

In return for this incursion into Connecticut, the people of that Province projected an attempt upon a post on Long Island, where a quantity of provisions had been collected for the use of the Royal army. This was Sagg Harbour, lying at the eastern extremity of Long Island. Its distance from New York, and the smallness of the force stationed there, induced the provincials to form the design of surprising it, and destroying the stores, by way of counterbalancing the damage that had been done them at Peek's Kill and Danbury.

The person pitched upon to conduct this enterprize, was Colonel Meigs, an active and daring officer. He was one of General Arnold's principal companions in his memorable expedition to Canada, and in his attack upon the city of Quebec, when General Montgomery was slain. He

May 23, embarked with a chosen party of resolute men, about one hundred and fifty in number; and eluding the vigilance of the many armed vessels that cruized in the Sound, he landed within four miles of Sagg Harbour. Its guard consisted only of a company of foot, and an armed schooner. He came upon them unawares, before break of day, and attacked them so vigorously, that though they made a stout resistance, he overpowered, and took them prisoners; destroying at the same time, all that could be found on shore, together with the craft that lay in the harbour, notwithstanding

ing a severe and continual fire from the schooner, that lay within less than two hundred yards distance.

What rendered this expedition the more remarkable, was the astonishing speed with which it was performed. It was begun and ended in less than thirty hours, computing from the time the party embarked at, to that when they returned to Guilford in Connecticut ; having, it is said, in that short space, measured about ninety miles by land and water. The diligence and courage displayed by Colonel Meigs, gained him uncommon applause, and shewed that he had not, without reason, been selected by General Arnold, to accompany him in the most arduous of the attempts he had formed.

The spring was now far advanced ; but the British army was prevented from taking the field through want of tents and other articles for encamping. The necessity, however, of watching the motions of the enemy, induced Lord Cornwallis to draw the troops that had wintered at Brunswick, out of their cantonments : He formed a camp with the old tents, on the high grounds commanding the communication along the River Raritan to Amboy, where General Vaughan did the same with the division under his command.

This deficiency of camp equipage proved of the most material consequence to General Washington, by affording him leisure to make due preparations for the ensuing campaign. He had, during the winter, carried on his operations with the best men that could be selected from the militia of the several Colonies ; but the major part returned home on the commencement of spring, which happened to be the term at which their obligation to serve had expired. The dread of experiencing the same difficulties in which he had been involved at the latter end of the preceding campaign, by the dissolution of the Provincial army, rendered him extremely anxious to keep them together, till reinforcements

ments could arrive to supply their places. But he could only prevail on a moderate number to remain. Some were influenced not to abandon him by the representations of their officers, how ungenerous it would be to desert the common cause at so critical a time ; but the major part were held by their attachment to his person ; which was in general a motive of great efficacy among his countrymen, and proved in various instances a circumstance of the highest utility to his party. On this occasion it absolutely prevented the troops he had from disbanding.

By these means he was enabled to preserve the appearance of an army ; but his real strength was so small, that had it been possible to take the field, he could not have maintained his ground. Thus, from whatever cause it proceeded, the delay in sending out tents and the other appurtenances of that nature, was one of the most unfortunate accidents that befel the British army in the present year ; as it entirely disabled it from commencing its operations, while General Washington was utterly unable to oppose them.

The new method adopted by Congress, in order to recruit their army, and keep it on a permanent footing, did not succeed so well as it had been expected. The length of time for which it was proposed to enlist, did not coincide with the views of a people, who thought that every man ought in his turn personally to stand forth in defence of his country. Such a system they considered as both equitable and not burthensome ; and did not seem willing to encourage any other. The enlistments went on slowly ; few cared to engage for the whole duration of the war ; and even three years appeared a long term to be absent from their business and families. Hence, notwithstanding the great encouragement given by the Congress, the numbers raised in each Colony fell much short of the proportion at which it had been rated.

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In the mean time, the exigency was so pressing, that every method was necessarily used to remedy these deficiencies. It was proposed to make drafts from the militia to fill up the regiments; but those who reflected on the temper and notions of the people at large, represented this as a dangerous expedient, and unfit to be tried unless in the greatest extremity. It would be considered as a breach of the public faith with individuals, and might lead them to withdraw their confidence from their rulers, the consequences of which would be fatal. In order to avoid these difficulties, permission was given to raise recruits among those multitudes of Irish emigrants, employed in the several Colonies in the capacity of indentured servants. By this measure, their masters indeed were deprived of their use during the time for which they had, as usual, purchased their servitude; but necessity, together with an assurance that they should be duly indemnified, were motives that could not be resisted on the present emergency.

It had been hoped that the Northern Colonies, as most abounding with white people, would have been able to spare a considerable supply to General Washington's army. They were founded accordingly; but they pleaded the danger with which they were menaced by the strong force under General Carlton. An invasion was certainly preparing from Canada: they did not think themselves safe at Boston itself; and there were other quarters from whence they might be attacked, and probably would, were they to divest themselves of the strength they had at present.

Such, however, amidst these difficulties, were the exertions of the Congress, and of the several Provincial Assemblies, that while the British troops were detained at New York, from the causes that have been mentioned, General Washington had the satis-

satisfaction of receiving numerous reinforcements from all parts, and to find himself in a situation of carrying those plans into execution, which he could not have done, had the British army been able to begin the campaign sooner.

Encouraged by this seasonable augmentation of strength, he moved forwards from Morris-town, and took a strong position in the neighbourhood of Brunswick, in the highlands, about Middle Brook. Here he threw up works along the front of his camp, well provided with cannon, and other defences. But his principal advantage was the difficulty to approach him; the ground being such, as exposed an enemy to every kind of danger in attacking him. He had chosen his situation with great judgment; on the one side he covered the Jerseys, and on the other he observed all the motions of the British forces at Brunswick, of which he commanded a full prospect from his camp, as well as of the country between that place and the shores of Staten Island.

The operations of the subsequent campaign took their direction principally from the manner with which General Washington had an opportunity of commencing it. Various and opposite opinions were now entertained of the plan of acting that should be adopted in the present circumstances.— Previous to General Washington's receiving such large reinforcements, and taking possession of the ground along Middle Brook, it was imagined that the British army would find no difficulty in penetrating through the Province of Jersey to the banks of the Delaware, and that the Provincials would not have been able to make any effectual opposition.— The reduction of the Jerseys, would have secured the communication between New York and the whole chain of posts that would have occupied the road between that city and the confines of Pennsylvania.

Vania. Had the enemy ventured a battle, in order to stop the progress of the army, nothing could have been more desirable, as an opportunity would then be given of striking a decisive blow: but as the enemy would probably retire as the British troops advanced, they would easily become masters of the passage over the Delaware, and consequently of Philadelphia, which was an open and defenceless city.

Such was the plan of proceeding formed during the winter among the majority of people at New York, and which probably would have taken place, had not obstructions of various kinds retarded it.— But General Washington's late movements had totally altered the face of things. He had now possessed himself of a position where it was impossible to attack him without incurring every disadvantage, and exposing the army to a considerable and inevitable loss, without obtaining, perhaps, any success. Were the army to march forwards to the Delaware, with an intention to force a passage, the leaving such an enemy as General Washington behind, would be attended with the utmost danger. He would hang on the rear, and cut off the communication with New York, while the Provincial forces were making head on the other side. Such a situation would lay the army open to numberless difficulties. Were it in such a case to fail in its attempt to cross the Delaware, which would prove a work of no small difficulty, from the many impediments that had been prepared, it would then be compelled to retreat to New York; but that would be found a task of no facility; the enemy would unquestionably seize upon all the passes, and great bloodshed must ensue, merely to force a passage back to their former station.

These considerations, made it appear more desirable to drop the design of penetrating into Pennsyl-

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vania across the Jerseys. As Philadelphia was the object aimed at, a passage by water seemed the least attended with difficulties; and though, perhaps, of more length, fully compensated that defect by its far greater safety. A plan of this kind would have the co-operation of the fleet, of which the assistance had been so effectual in the principal operations of the last campaign. By gaining possession of Philadelphia, the British army would be stationed in the center of the Colonies, and have the immediate command of the rich and fertile Province of Pennsylvania, and be at hand to invade any part of the neighbouring Provinces of Virginia and Maryland, both by land and by water. Add to this, that an expedition of this nature might be undertaken with great facility, from the immense number of transports, well manned, and well found in every respect, with which they were happily furnished, and which put it in their power to avail themselves of every advantage which naval superiority could give.

Before this determination was adopted, it was resolved, however, to try every method in order to induce General Washington to quit his position, and bring him, if it were practicable, to risk an engagement.

In the beginning of June, the long expected, and much wanted supply of tents and camp equipage arrived from England, together with a fresh body of German auxiliaries, and a considerable number of British recruits. Sir William Howe, after waiting with the utmost impatience, was at length enabled to take the field. He repaired immediately to the Jerseys, and pitched his camp opposite to that of General Washington.

The Provincial army, exclusive of the strong post it occupied, had received such an accession of numbers, as made it very considerable. The retardment of the necessaries that were to come from England,

England, had afforded time for detachments to arrive from the furthermost Colonies to Washington's encampment. The Northern Provinces, besides providing for the guard of the Lakes, had at last arrayed a large force, which was sent under the Generals Gates, Arnold, and Parsons, with orders to station it on the North River, in readiness to pass it, and march to the assistance of General Washington, in case of need.

Sir William Howe was now employed in continual endeavours to draw the American General from his encampment. He had a variety of obstacles to encounter: on the one hand, the vigilance of the Jersey militia was exerted in cutting off all refreshments, and watching all his motions. They performed this duty with the more keenness, as they were prompted by the resentment of their former sufferings. On the other hand, General Washington, though cautious not to involve himself in any risk, omitted no opportunity of exercising his men, and inuring them to action, by engaging them in skirmishes upon advantageous terms:

The British General made several movements, as if intending to march to the Delaware. Considerable detachments passed along the flanks of the American army, taking the road to Philadelphia. Several motions of this tendency were made; but as they produced no effect, Sir William Howe drew nearer to the enemy's camp, where he continued some days, reconnoitring every pass and opening by which an access to it might be found. But after much toil and search, none could be discovered that was practicable; the approaches were so strongly fortified, and every post so well guarded, that no hope remained of forcing them.

That no effort might be left untried to bring the American General out of his strong hold, another stratagem was put in practice. Sir William Howe

broke up his camp with great seeming precipitation, and retired hastily from the ground he had just occupied.

June 19, cupied:—He abandoned the post of Brunswick, and withdrew his whole army towards Amboy. This sudden movement, so little expected, and executed with such promptitude, deceived the provincials. They came down from their encampment in large detachments, and followed closely the rear of the British army, which still continued to retreat before them. They charged it with the greatest fury, and from the celerity with which it moved, were encouraged to make a vigorous pursuit. As soon as the British army had reached Amboy, a portable bridge, which had been constructed for the passage of the Delaware, was thrown over the channel between Amboy and Staten Island. The baggage and heavy appurtenances, together with some troops, crossed over it to the other shore, and all seemed prepared for the remainder of the army to pass.

General Washington was now persuaded that June 26, this retreat was no feint. He decamped, 1777. and came forwards to Quibble Town, in order to support the troops he had detached after the British army. As soon as this motion was perceived, Sir William Howe led it back in several divisions, by different roads, in order to surround the provincials, and force them to an engagement, by cutting off their retreat. The more effectually to compass this design, Lord Cornwallis was dispatched with a strong body, to seize on the passes to that mountainous part of the country which the provincials had just left. He was met by a large party, advantageously posted at the entrance of a wood, and well furnished with artillery. It was commanded by a gentleman well known in America by the title of Lord Stirling, though not admitted as valid in Britain. The troops under Lord Cornwallis were a mixture of British,

tish and Hessians : they behaved on this occasion with an emulation which the Provincials were not able to resist. They were quickly broken on all sides, and fled to a place called Westfield, where they took shelter in a thick wood.

The American General now saw the necessity of making a speedy retreat to his former situation, in order to secure it. He seized with all diligence those passes to the mountains, which he soon perceived Lord Cornwallis had in view ; and with all possible expedition he repossefled himself of the encampment from which he had been decoyed by the dexterity of the British General.

It now became evident, that no scheme whatever would move General Washington from the position he had resumed. To march through the Jerseys to the Delaware, appeared an attempt highly imprudent from the reasons that have been specified. Nothing therefore remained for the accomplishment of what was proposed, than to embrace the scheme of going to Philadelphia by sea.

While the necessary preparations were making for this important expedition, the spirit of enterprise which had lately signalized several of the American officers, was productive of a remarkable adventure. The capture of General Lee by Colonel Harcourt, had occasioned much concern among the Americans, on account of the refusal to release him upon the terms that were offered by General Washington. They had long watched for an opportunity of making prisoner some British officer of equal rank, in order to procure his exchange. One seemed at length to be offered. The British troops that had taken, and were quartered in Rhode Island, were at the present commanded by General Prescot. A project was formed to surprize him, as General Lee had been, and to bring him off in the same manner. To this intent, Colonel Barton, a dexterous and re-

solute man, with about forty others, went over from July 10, Providence to Rhode Island, in the night ; 1777. and notwithstanding the shipping stationed on their way, and the number of troops distributed about the Island, they landed undiscovered, seized the General in his quarters, and brought him off with his Aid de Camp, without meeting with any interruption.

This capture occasioned uncommon satisfaction to the Americans, from the certain prospect it afforded them of recovering General Lee, for whom they entertained much respect, and were not devoid of anxiety. They considered him as a person particularly obnoxious to the British ministry, and of whom, should fortune favour the British arms in America, they would not scruple to make an example. In this light they were highly desirous of an occasion to procure his deliverance, and were of course exceedingly rejoiced at an event which in their opinion insured it.

This unexpected seizure of his person in so disagreeable a manner, was a severe mortification to General Prescot. He had not long before set a price upon General Arnold, and promised a sum of money to any one that apprehended him. The latter answered this affront by setting a lower price upon the former.

This action of Colonel Barton, did not pass unnoticed by the Congress, any more than that of Colonel Meigs, at Sagg Harbour. They voted them, together with the officers and soldiers who had accompanied them in their respective enterprizes, their public thanks, for the valour, activity and address with which they had conducted them ; and ordered an elegant sword to be presented to each of the Colonels,

In order, at the same, to testify their respect and gratitude to the memory of those who had lost their lives

lives in the cause of America, and as an incitement to imitate their courage and patriotism, the Congress decreed that a monument should be erected at Boston in remembrance of General Warren, who was slain at Bunker's Hill; and another in Virginia, for General Mercer, who fell in the action near Princeton.

As the circumstances of the former of these gentlemen were not affluent, it was also resolved by that Assembly, that his son should be considered as the child of the Public, and should accordingly receive a liberal and gentlemanly education at the expense of the United States.

C H A P. XXVI.

Expedition up the Chesapeake into Pennsylvania.

1777.

WHILE Sir William Howe was making the necessary preparations for the projected expedition, the attention of the enemy was taken up in conjectures concerning its destination. Every part of the continent that lay open to an attack, was equally alarmed on this occasion. Philadelphia made no doubt of its being the object of this formidable armament. But the country lying on the North River, was almost equally apprehensive. Intersecting the North and South Colonies, it was thought by some, that the intention was to form a junction with the forces that were on their march from Canada, in order to cut off the communication between the New England Provinces and General Washington's army. Charlestown was not without its fears; and Boston, from its importance, suspected an attempt, which was the better founded, as it was principally there the numerous privateers were fitted out that were so detrimental to the commerce of Britain.

General Washington felt the criticalness of his situation, and the superiority arising from the naval strength, that enabled the British army to menace at once every part of the American continent. The necessity of waiting till he could receive positive intelligence of the operations it had in view, obliged him to keep his position.

The great preparations that were indispensably requisite for so important an expedition, were not completed until the month of July was far advanced:

ced : it was the twenty-third before the armament was able to take its departure from Sandy Hook.

Some days before the embarkation of the army, Sir William Howe directed some transports to sail up the North River. They were accompanied by a large floating-battery, and other appearances of a design upon that quarter. This feint succeeded so well, as to induce General Washington to detach a strong force towards that River.

The strength employed upon the expedition under Sir William Howe, consisted of thirty-six British and Hessian battalions, with a regiment of light horse, and a body of Loyalists, raised at New York. The remainder of these, with another body of light horse, and seventeen battalions, were left at New York, under the command of General Clinton.—Seven battalions were stationed at Rhode Island.

A whole week's navigation was consumed in making the mouth of the Delaware. Here intelligence was received, that such effectual measures had been taken to obstruct the passage of the fleet up that river, that it would be equally dangerous and fruitless to attempt it. In consequence of this information, it was determined to proceed further south, and to sail up the Chesapeak Bay, as far as that part of Maryland which borders on Pennsylvania, and is at no great distance from Philadelphia. Here the situation of the country would not afford so many advantages to the Provincial army, and it would be compelled either to retire before the British troops, or to engage them on more equal terms than they could be brought to in the Jerseys.

This voyage was rendered extremely long and tedious through contrary winds. It was the middle of August, before the fleet's entrance into Chesapeak Bay. Great inconvenience was felt from the excessive heat of the weather in that sultry climate ; but through the care and vigilance of the commanders

ders, the health of the people was so effectually consulted, that at the time of landing, they were in a state of strength and vigour very uncommon among soldiers after so long a confinement at sea.

The navigation up the Bay was very difficult and intricate. The Admiral's great professional knowledge was of constant and high utility upon this occasion. Through a multitude of dangers, the fleet was safely conducted as far up the River Elk, as it was practicable. Here the army landed without opposition, on the 25th of August, after more than a month's passage from its leaving Sandy Hook.

Part of the army was left to guard the stores and artillery, while they were landing, and to bring them forward with all speed. The General advanced into the country at the head of the main body, taking with him very little baggage and incumbrances of any kind, and moving with all possible expedition to the head of the Elk.

General Washington, upon information of the fleets sailing up the Chesapeake, quitted the Jerseys, and hastened to the defence of Philadelphia, which was now visibly the object of the armaments destination. On hearing of the British army's landing at the Elk, he encamped on the Brandywine Creek, lying about midway from the Elk to Philadelphia.

The former depredations of the Hessians, and the consequent irregularities of the troops in general, having excited much consternation among the people on shore, at their landing, it was judged necessary, in order to tranquilize the minds of the inhabitants, to publish a declaration, promising the strictest discipline and regularity on the part of the soldiery, and full security and protection to all who behaved peaceably. Whoever had not assumed legislative or judicial authority, were included in this promise, notwithstanding they might have acted illegally in

inferior

inferior stations, provided they returned immediately to their homes, and demeaned themselves inoffensively in future. A general pardon was offered at the same time to all officers and soldiers in the American service, who should lay down their arms, and surrender themselves.

Sundry impediments prevented the Royal army from quitting the head of the Elk, till the beginning of September. General Washington was now advanced to Redclay Creek, between the Brandywine and the Elk. The Provincials posted themselves in the woods contiguous to the march of the British army; from whence they interrupted its progress by continual attacks. In these circumstances, the British General was necessitated to advance slowly, and with great circumspection, through a country so well known to the enemy, to which he was a stranger, and where every step he took would certainly be disputed.

He was obliged, on this occasion, to be very sparing of his men, and to reserve them for services of importance and decision; but the enemy, whose business it was to diminish his numbers, assailed him by incessant skirmishes, wherein, though they were generally repulsed, yet their aim was obtained, which was to weaken him without exposing themselves to any more than the loss of men; which they could easily replace with others, while such a loss to him remained for a while irreparable.

As the British army continued to advance, notwithstanding their efforts to impede its progress, they retired on the other side of the Brandywine, where they posted themselves on the rising grounds upon its banks, in order to dispute its passage. Their army consisted of about fifteen thousand men. The force at present in the field under Sir William Howe, did not exceed that number.

Early

Early in the morning of the eleventh of September, the British army formed in two columns, marched to the enemy: the right, under General Knyphausen, proceeded to the most practicable passage, called Chadsford. Here the center and chief force of the enemy lay, expecting, and well prepared for an attack. A severe fire of cannon continued from ten o'clock till the close of day. The Hessian General, according to orders, making repeated feints to attempt the passage of the ford. Several detachments of the Provincial army crossed the River, and engaged the British troops; but after a variety of skirmishes, they were at length totally routed, and compelled to repass the River.

While these two divisions of the opposite armies were occupied in this manner, Lord Cornwallis, at the head of the column on the left, took a long circuit to the upper part of the Brandywine, where it is divided in two shallow streams. These he passed without opposition, and marched directly to attack the right wing of the provincials.

On the discovery of this movement, General Sullivan was detached to oppose him with all the force that could be spared from the center. This body waited the approach of that under Lord Cornwallis, on a very advantageous eminence, guarded on its right, as well as on its left, by thick and extensive woods. In this position they were attacked by Lord Cornwallis; and notwithstanding the strength of their situation, and a very resolute defence, their left was driven from its posts, and fled to the woods, whither it was warmly pursued,

On this disaster of the left, their right wing, which had not been broken, retired in good order to another advantageous ground, from whence, after some resistance, they were also compelled to retire in such confusion, that they were not able to rally.

During

During this defeat and flight of both their wings, their center, which was yet entire and strongly posted, endeavoured, by a seasonable resistance, to favour the retreat of the rest. On the coming up of Lord Cornwallis's main body, a very warm conflict ensued. Here the provincials stood their ground with so much resolution, that night came on before they abandoned their post, and prevented their being pursued.

Neither was it till towards evening, that General Knyphausen was able to cross the ford. Herein he was chiefly favoured by the vigorous attack that was making on their right. He stormed the intrenchment, and seized the cannon that defended the ford. While he was thus employed, the British troops that had broken General Sullivan's left wing, after penetrating through the woods, to which it had fled, now suddenly appeared in sight of that part of the Provincial army, which was contending with General Knyphausen. This unexpected appearance threw them into such consternation, that they gave way on all sides, and withdrew with the utmost precipitation. Darkness saved them from pursuit, as it had done those under General Sullivan; otherwise the greatest part of the American army must probably have been taken or destroyed.

The behaviour of the Americans on this day, was in general firm and courageous. Some of the new levies were faulty in their discipline, and, from want of expertness, were soon confused and put in disorder; but the remainder shewed that they had acquired no mean degree of military skill and fortitude. Those who distinguished themselves most on this occasion, were the Virginians. It was remarked, upon this, as well as other occurrences, that the satisfaction they felt at seeing their countryman, General Washington, at the head of the American armies, together with the affection they bore to his person,

person, often contributed not a little to animate the Virginians in the continental army, to exert themselves in a particular manner.

The loss of the Americans in this action, was considerable. Besides the prisoners, amounting to four hundred, it was computed that the number of killed and wounded was near one thousand. The loss of the Royal army did not exceed five hundred in wounded and slain; the latter were not one hundred.

Immediately after the battle, the Americans withdrew to Chester, and the next day to Philadelphia. They were followed by the Royal army with great order and circumspection. Though defeated, they were not dispirited, and considered their misfortune rather as the consequence of superior skill and discipline on the side of their enemies, than as proceeding from a defect of valour on theirs.

Leaving the sick and wounded at Wilmington on the Delaware, the British General continued his march towards Philadelphia. General Washington, unwilling to be forced to a second engagement, quitted that city, and posted himself on the road towards Lancaster, an inland town, at a considerable distance from Philadelphia. Sir William Howe, on being apprized of this movement, advanced upon him; and was making the dispositions requisite to compel him to another action; when a violent rain, that lasted a whole day and night, prevented him from completing them, and enabled the Provincial army to avoid the danger.

In order to harass and fatigue the Royal army, General Washington posted several detachments in such a manner, as to command all the roads and avenues to their encampment. His intent was to seize all opportunities of drawing detached parties from their main body into ambuscades. This he could the more readily effect, as the country was every

every where in his interest, and as the Provincial army abounded with people perfectly acquainted with all its local advantages.

A very considerable detachment sent upon a design of this nature, lay concealed in the depth of a forest, that stood at a small distance behind the British camp; it consisted of fifteen hundred men, commanded by General Wayne. Upon this intelligence, Sir William Howe dispatched General Grey in the middle of night, with a party to surprize it. The enterprize was conducted with singular address and intrepidity. Ordering his men not to fire a single shot, he advanced in profound silence to the out posts of the enemy, which were surprized and secured without the least noise. It was now between twelve and one. The main body of the enemy, unapprized of its danger, was retired to rest. Directed by the light of their fires, the party under General Grey proceeded undiscovered to their encampment, and, according to the injunctions they had received, rushed upon them with their bayonets. Three hundred were killed and wounded, and a great number taken, with most of their arms and baggage. Obscurity saved those that escaped, as it had done before at Brandywine Creek. Of the British party, four only were slain, and as many wounded.

In the mean time, Sir William Howe was employing every movement and stratagem to draw the provincials to action; but they too well knew the consequence of losing another battle in the present posture of their affairs. They did not seem inclined to risk an action even to save Philadelphia itself, now become the metropolis of America. When General Washington saw that he must either abandon the defence of that city, or venture an engagement, he declined the latter without hesitation, as involving a decision, which, if unfavourable to him, would

would put an end to all the hopes of further resistance.

The British General discovering this to be his final intention, approached to the Schuylkill, the river that runs on the west, as the Delaware does on the east of Philadelphia. Having made such dispositions as were necessary to secure the passage over it, he conveyed the British army safe to the other side, without any opposition from the enemy. Nothing appeared to obstruct him; he marched to German town; and the next day, which was the twenty-seventh of September, he took peaceable possession of the city of Philadelphia.

It had been expected by many, that should that city have been found untenable, the provincials would have committed it to the flames, sooner than suffer it to fall into the hands of their enemies, and become a place of arms, from whence they would have it in their power, from its central situation, to annoy the other Colonies at command. But the hopes of recovering it on a happier day, prevailed over the fears of the service it might prove, while it remained in the possession of Britain.

Previous to their evacuation of Philadelphia, the Congress had ordered some of the principal Quakers, and other gentlemen of the first consideration in that place, above twenty in number, to be taken into custody, as strongly attached to the Royal cause, and known enemies to the ruling powers. These gentlemen had repeatedly refused to give any written or verbal acknowledgment of allegiance or submission to the American government, or promise of holding no correspondence with its enemies. Notwithstanding the evident danger their persons were in, they had even the resolution to refuse confining themselves to their respective dwellings. The spirit of these gentlemen was unconquerable to the last. As they still persisted, in defiance of threats,

threats, and in spite of all solicitation and intreaty, immovable in their principles and in their determination to reject the test that was proposed to them, they were sent off prisoners to Stanton, in Virginia, as soon as it was apprehended that the British troops would take possession of Philadelphia.

The first care of the British General, on his becoming master of this city, was to erect batteries on the Delaware in order to cut off the communication between that part of the river above, and that below the city, and to secure it at the same time from an attack by water. This undertaking was opposed as soon as begun. An American frigate, of thirty-six guns, assisted by another of smaller force, and some other armed vessels, attacked the batteries immediately on perceiving the people at work upon them. The firing lasted some hours; but upon the tide of ebb, the largest frigate grounded, and could not be removed. Some pieces of cannon being immediately levelled at her, she could not stand the fire; her colours were struck, and she surrendered. The other vessels sheered off.

But though Philadelphia was taken, the access to it by sea was yet impracticable; a variety of works had been constructed at a great expence, and with equal industry and labour, to render all attempts to come up the Delaware fruitless. Facing the point of land where the Schuylkill flows into that river, lies an island formed by an accumulation of mud and sand, and thence called Mud Island. Here very strong batteries were erected. On the Jersey shore, lying opposite to this, at a place called Redbank, a fort was built, well furnished with heavy cannon. Along the channel between those batteries, ponderous machines were sunk, contrived after the manner of chevaux de frize, from which they received that denomination. They were immense beams crossing each other in sundry direc-

tions, and headed with points of iron, strongly fixed, to pierce any ship that should strike on them. The above batteries crossed, and fully commanded that part of the river where these machines were deposited; and they were sunk so deep, as not to be weighed without immense trouble and difficulty; but this was a work that could not be undertaken without silencing those batteries, and being in possession of both fides of the river.

At Billing's Point, some miles lower on the Jersey shore, several more of these chevaux de frize were sunk in the channel of the river, and protected by redoubts that mounted very heavy artillery. On the river itself were gallies well provided with cannon, and two floating batteries, with a number of armed vessels, and several fire ships. All these impediments were to be overcome before access could be had to Philadelphia.

On the defeat of the Provincial army at Brandywine Creek, and the consequent march of the Royal army to Philadelphia, Lord Howe prepared to sail round to the Delaware, to support those operations in which the assistance of the fleet would indispensably be necessary. After entering the Delaware, as it was not possible to proceed up to Philadelphia, the fleet came to an anchor off the town of Newcastle, on the Pennsylvania shore.

As the navigation of the river was extremely annoyed by the batteries at Billing's Point, Sir William Howe detached a body of troops, under Colonel Sterling, to dislodge the enemy from that fort: on perceiving the Colonel's party crossing the river from Chester, on the Pennsylvania side, the garrison immediately spiked all their guns, set fire to the buildings in the fort, and abandoned it without waiting to be attacked, or endeavouring to prevent the Colonel's landing. After the detachment had destroyed the fort, and especially those batteries that

that commanded the river, Captain Hammond of the Roebuck, a very brave and active officer, proceeded to execute the difficult business with which he had been intrusted by the Admiral. This was to cut away, and weigh up those ponderous machines that lay at the bottom of the river. He was vigorously opposed by the floating batteries, and naval force of the enemy that was stationed on the river to guard them; but with great courage, perseverance, and labour, he overcame their resistance, and succeeded in opening a passage for the shipping through this part of the Delaware.

In the mean time the British army lay encamped in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Its principal quarters were at Germantown, an extended place, consisting of a street two miles long. The enemy was posted at Skippach Creek, fifteen miles distant. As they had lately been reinforced with some chosen troops, General Washington hearing that the Royal army had detached several parties on various necessary services, and that another part of it lay at Philadelphia, determined to attempt the surprizing of that which was at German Town.

On the third of October, towards the evening, he left his camp at Skippach Creek, and marched in great silence, under the cover of night, hoping to reach the British camp undiscovered. At three in the morning he was close upon it, and immediately made the requisite dispositions for an attack; but fortunately the patrols discovered his approach, and the troops were called to arms. Those whom he first attacked, being at the furthermost end of German Town, and remote from the main body, were, after a brave resistance, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to fall back into the town, whither they closely followed.

The suddenness of the attack, and the vigour with which it was supported by the enemy, obliged

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the British troops to make the greatest efforts to resist him. Colonel Musgrave, at the head of the fortieth regiment, had stood his ground till he was almost surrounded. Seeing no other way of resisting the impetuosity and strength of the enemy, he took possession of a large and strong stone-house, that lay full in their front, with six companies of that regiment. From thence he kept up an incessant fire, and effectually checked the ardour with which they had hitherto proceeded.

It was necessary to dislodge the Colonel, in order to effect the purpose they proposed, which was to separate the two wings of the Royal army, that were divided from each other by this, and the other houses of Germantown. They brought up a whole brigade, with artillery, and assailed it on every side with the utmost fury, but without being able to dispossess him.

In the mean time, General Grey came up to his assistance, with a great part of the left wing, and was seconded by General Agnew, with another considerable body. A part of the right wing advanced upon the enemy on the other side. The engagement was maintained during some time with equal obstinacy; but the enemy was at length broken, driven out of the town, and pursued with great slaughter.

After gaining this advantage, General Grey moved with all possible speed to the support of the remainder of the British right wing, which was engaged in a hot dispute with the enemy's left. But this accession of strength compelled them instantly to give way, and completed the total rout of the Provincial army. It now quitted the field on all sides; but though the pursuit was continued some miles, as the country was intersected with woods and enclosures, they made their advantages of them, and found means to carry off their cannon.

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The Americans attributed the loss of the day to the haziness of the weather. It was so thick, that they could not discover the situation nor movements of the British army, nor yet those of their own.— This prevented them from acting in concert; it even occasioned them to fire upon each other through mistake, in the heat of action; and was, in short, according to their representation, the real cause of the British army's having time to recover from their first surprise, and to put themselves in a posture of defence.

The British army lost in this battle, in wounded and prisoners, about four hundred and thirty men; no more than seventy were killed: a small loss in number, but it consisted, among others, of some very brave and excellent officers; among these, General Agnew, and Colonel Bird were particularly regretted. Of the Americans three hundred were slain, six hundred wounded, and upwards of four hundred made prisoners, among whom were fifty-four officers.

After the action at Germantown, General Washington returned to his encampment at Skippach Creek, where he continued to watch the motions of the British army, which had removed from Germantown to Philadelphia, in order to execute those operations which were necessary to enable it to winter in that city.

The reduction of Mud Island, and the other fortified places on the river, were the principal objects in view, together with the clearing it of those impediments that obstructed its navigation. A strong battery was erected for this purpose on the western point of land nearest to Mud Island, and a large body of Hessians were detached across the river, to attack the fort of Red Bank, on the Jersey shore.

This detachment was commanded by Colonel Donop, one of the best officers in the Hessian army, and who had rendered some signal and important

services in this war. He was to be supported in this enterprise by some ships of force, and the arrangements for it were formed with great judgment. He made an intrepid assault on the enemy's entrenchments, and carried their principal outwork; but their interior defences were so strong, that they could not be forced. The Hessians were obliged to retire, with the loss of their Colonel, who was mortally wounded, with several other brave officers. In advancing to the attack, and in their retreat, they were severely galled by the enemy's gallies and floating-batteries; to which, as they were obliged in their march to keep along the shore, they could not avoid being entirely exposed. Thus the attack by land totally failed.

The attack made by the ships was equally judicious and spirited: having made their way through the channel, which Captain Hammond had exerted with so much resolution and industry in rendering practicable, they took their station in such a manner, as to assail the works and batteries towards the Delaware, while the troops assaulted the defences on shore. But the obstructions contrived by the enemy, had interrupted and altered the course of the river, and wrought such changes in its usual depth, that the ships could not compass a favourable situation for the direction of their fire. To those causes it was owing, that the Augusta, a ship of the line, and the Merlin, in working up to come close into action, were both grounded, and could not be got afloat.

The enemy perceiving the situation of these vessels, directed the whole fire of their gallies, floating batteries, and works on shore, and sent four fire-ships down the stream against them: but though the skill and courage of the seamen and officers rendered them ineffectual, the Augusta took fire during the engagement, and was burnt, together

ther with the Merlin; and the other ships were obliged to withdraw, in order to escape the conflagration.

Notwithstanding this unsuccessful attempt, the determination still continued to surmount these various obstacles, both from the spirit of the commanders, and the absolute necessity of overcoming them. New measures were taken, and fresh preparations were made for this purpose. The enemy, who saw with what difficulties the accomplishment of this object would be attended, neglected nothing to increase them, and to throw additional obstructions in its way.

The people belonging to the fleet were of particular service upon this occasion. Through a small and difficult channel on the west side of the river, they conveyed a number of heavy pieces of artillery to a little island within gun-shot of Mud Island, and erected batteries that greatly annoyed it. On the fifteenth of November, it was attacked by the Isis of fifty, and the Somerset of sixty guns, and by other vessels mounting heavy cannon. These seconded so effectually the batteries on the above-mentioned island, that after defending themselves vigorously during the whole day, the garrison of Mud Island, perceiving that preparations were making to give a general assault to their works on the next day, abandoned them in the night.

As the works at Red Bank were yet unreduced, Lord Cornwallis crossed the Delaware, and advanced at the head of a considerable body to attack it; but the garrison withdrew at his approach, and the place was demolished.

The works and forts on all parts of the river being thus reduced, a number of the enemy's shipping, on seeing themselves deprived of this protection, took the opportunity of the first dark night, to pass the batteries erected at Philadelphia unobserved,

and to move farther up the Delaware for their security. In order to prevent the remainder from escaping in the same manner the frigate that had been taken from them was manned, and sent, with some other armed vessels, to intercept them.— They were so effectually cut off from the retreat they had proposed, that to prevent their vessels from being captured, they set them on fire, and abandoned them. They were all burnt, to the number of seventeen, among which were two considerable floating batteries.

The news that Philadelphia was in the possession of the Royal army, had, in the mean time, spread an universal alarm throughout the continent. The Northern Colonies, which were most remote from danger, and had lately met with some signal successes, resolved upon this occasion, to use their utmost efforts to enable General Washington to stand his ground till the expiration of winter; when they doubted not of being able to collect such a force as would render Philadelphia untenable by the British forces. They now sent him a reinforcement of four thousand of their best men. By their arrival, he found himself so strengthened, that he advanced within fourteen miles of Philadelphia, and fixed himself in a strong encampment near a tract of land called White Marsh.

This motion of the American General, gave hope to Sir William Howe that he was not disinclined to make another attempt, similar to that of Germantown, in which case a general engagement might ensue, which was an object of constant seeking to the British army, as well as to their commander.

In order to afford General Washington such an opportunity, if he sought one, and to be at hand to improve any that offered to attack him, Sir William Howe marched out of Philadelphia on the fourth day of December, and posted himself opposite

sitè to the Provincial troops. He varied his position several times, to draw them, if possible, from that which they had taken; but they remained immovable, contenting themselves with frequent skirmishes, in which they were constantly worsted.— Upon these occasions, their defeated parties were always pursued close up to their lines, with an intent to provoke them to come forth. But finding their determination was to act entirely on the defensive, after reconnoitring every part of the ground they occupied, and discovering it to be every where inaccessible, he resolved to return to Philadelphia, in order to refresh his troops. They had suffered great ~~inconveniences~~, during their short excursion, from the severity of the weather; having from their eagerness and hopes of coming to immediate action with the Provincials, left Philadelphia without their tents, or any other preparation for encampment.

His march back to Philadelphia was performed in the afternoon of the eighth of December, leisurely, and in presence of the enemy, who, contrary to his wishes, gave him however no molestation. The disappointment was very grievous to the British troops; as the winter was approaching, they were earnestly desirous to close the campaign, if not with a decisive, at least with some conspicuous action, that should leave the enemy discouraged, and weaken his endeavours and exertions to harass and distress them, during the inclement season they were about to experience.

The last operation of the British army was to procure forage for the winter. A large detachment was sent out for that purpose, which was successfully accomplished. After this, nothing remained but to provide for the safe and comfortable weathering out of the winter, by disposing of the troops in such a manner as to guard against the surprises

to

to which they were liable in such an open place as Philadelphia: it was done accordingly with all proper diligence and care.

General Washington, on the other hand, removed his camp from White Marsh, to a place called Valley Forge, on the borders of the Schuylkill, about fifteen miles from Philadelphia. It was a position full of strength and security, from whence he could observe every motion of the British army, and receive the speediest information of all that was transacting at Philadelphia.

Proposing to pass the winter in this encampment, huts were erected, in order to enable the Provincial army the better to encounter the rigour of that season. Nothing shewed the warmth and firmness of their attachment, both to their General, and to the cause for which they were contending, than their willingness to submit to the various hardships, as well as inconveniences of so uncomfortable a situation: it displayed a resolution and perseverance, which were convincing proofs to all reflecting people, that the war, however fatally it might terminate for them, would be of long duration, were Britain determined to prosecute it until America was entirely reduced. The resources of a people who could bear trials and sufferings with so much patience and readiness, were, at all events considerable, and not easily exhausted.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Military Operations on the Lakes, and in the Northern Parts of America.

1777.

WHILE these transactions were taking place in the middle Colonies, events of a much more important and decisive nature happened in the Northern Provinces of America.

The British ministry had long projected an extensive line of military operations in this quarter. It was an object from which the most sanguine hopes had been conceived, and no doubt was entertained that to succeed here, would ensure success in every other part of America.

The four Provinces of New England were considered as the soul and support of the present confederacy of America against Britain. Could an impression be made upon them, it seemed evident that every other Colony would be almost equally affected.

In this conviction, a resolution had been taken to employ the summer of the present year in making a vigorous and spirited campaign upon the Lakes, and in the adjoining Provinces. The reduction of the first, would open an entrance into the last; they were the natural barriers of the Northern Colonies, and if they could be forced, the others, it was presumed, would not be able to defend themselves, after having failed in the defence of such a strong outwork.

It was resolved, therefore, to leave nothing undone that could contribute to the success of the expedition that was intended. A sufficient number of regular and veteran troops was provided, excellently

ly officered, furnished with a numerous artillery, and abundantly supplied with all manner of necessaries. Besides the troops that came from Europe, it was expected that in Canada, from whence this expedition was to take its departure, a considerable assistance would be found from the great number of fighting men it was able to afford, who though not regularly disciplined, were well acquainted with the use of arms, and would be of essential service, from their knowledge of the country, and manner of warring.

To these forces was to be added a large proportion of the native Indians. Governor Carlton was accordingly directed to exert his influence among them for this purpose. Such was his address and zeal in forwarding this, as he had done every other measure conducive to the business in agitation, that, what from the respect and attachment they professed for him, and what from their natural propensity to war and plunder, their warriors repaired to him in multitudes.

The British troops appointed to this expedition amounted to four thousand, the Germans to three thousand: the Province of Quebec, exclusive of its militia, supplied large parties of men for the works that were carrying on at several places, and for the transporting of stores, provisions, and baggage across the rivers, and through the many difficult passes in that country.

The command of this expedition was given to General Burgoyne, an officer of unquestionable ability, and whose active disposition, and ardour for military fame, distinguished him in a particular manner.

The officers employed under him were men of great bravery and experience:—The principal were, General Philips, of the artillery, who had acquired great reputation in Germany during the late war; Generals

Generals Frazer, Powell, and Hamilton, all excellent officers : the German Generals Reidesel and Specht, were both persons of great professional merit.

The soldiers composing the army under them, were well disciplined men ; they came fresh and vigorous from their winter quarters, where all possible care had been taken for the preservation of their health, and to prepare them by continual exercise for the business they were going upon.

In aid to the principal expedition, another was projected on the Mohawk river, under Colonel St. Leger, who was to be assisted by Sir John Johnson, son to the famous Sir William Johnson, who had so greatly distinguished himself in America during the last war.

The first general encampment of the army was on the western side of Lake Champlain. Here a de-
June 21, 1777. putation of the Indians in alliance with Britain, was met by General Burgoyne, who treated them with a great war-feast, according to the ceremonial established among those nations.

He made a speech to them on that occasion full of that strength and animation which peculiarly characterised his manner of speaking. He exhorted them to behave with courage and fidelity to their friends, and to avoid all barbarity towards their enemies. He entreated them to be particularly careful in distinguishing between the adherents and the foes to the British nation. He earnestly requested that they would put none to death but such as actually opposed them with arms in their hands, and to spare old men, women, children, and prisoners ; to scalp only such as they had killed in action, and to treat compassionately the wounded and dying. He promised them a due reward for every prisoner they brought in, but assured them he would look narrowly into every demand for scalps.

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Injunctions of this kind were unusual; and not very acceptable to the ferocious dispositions of these uncivilized multitudes. They were not, however, without effect; and though they did not entirely prevent, they proved a great restraint to the perpetration of their customary barbarities.

After addressing the Indians in this manner, a declaration was published, in order to admonish and terrify the Americans, and to induce them to lay down their arms, and to return to the obedience of the British government, from the prospect of the miseries and horrors they would experience on the part of the Indians, now engaged on the side of Britain, and whose ravages and cruelty it would not be possible to controul. He displayed to them the strength of that power which was to be employed against America by sea and land, warning them to cease a resistance that exposed them to so many calamities, and that would probably terminate in the ruin of their country. He promised to encourage and employ all those who should assist in bringing their countrymen back to their duty, and in re-establishing the authority of the British government. Assurances of protection were given, upon the performance of certain conditions, to those who demeaned themselves peaceably, and did not forsake their habitations: threatening, at the same time, severe treatment to such as committed hostilities, or abetted them against the armies or adherents of Britain.

After establishing magazines, and settling an hospital at Crown Point, the campaign opened by the siege of Ticonderoga. The Americans had taken great pains to fortify this post, already very strong by nature. On the eastern shore facing Ticonderoga, which lies on the west, they had erected a strong fortification on the summit of a hill, which they named Fort Independence: the sides and bottom of this hill were strengthened with works well furnished

furnished with cannon. The communication between this post and the fort at Ticonderoga, was maintained by a bridge constructed over the gut where the fort stands, and through which the water from Lake George flows into Lake Champlain. It was upheld by twenty-two piers of vast dimensions, sunk into the water at equal distances: to these, floats were fastened, fifty foot long, and twelve wide; and the whole was held together by chains and rivets of immense size: the side of the bridge towards Lake Champlain, was protected by a boom consisting of large pieces of timber, joined together with iron bolts and chains of prodigious thickness. Both the bridge and boom were justly considered as a work of equal industry and labour.

In a small bay to the southward of this bridge, there is a point of land, on which a mountain stands, called Sugar-hill. From this mountain the fort of Ticonderoga is overlooked, and effectually commanded. From this motive it was proposed to fortify this hill, as a necessary security to the fort; but the extent of the works they had already erected, induced the Americans to drop the design, having hardly force sufficient to man them properly. The ruggedness of the ground on its summit and sides, and the difficulty of its access, would, it was imagined, prevent it from being of any use to an enemy.

The garrison of Ticonderoga consisted of about six thousand men, commanded by General Sinclair. It was formed partly of continental regulars, and partly of militia.

The British army was in two divisions, one upon each side of Lake Champlain. This was occupied by the shipping, which, from the destruction of the naval force of the Americans in the preceding year, was now in full possession of that Lake.

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On the second of July, the British right wing that marched on the west of the Lake, appeared in sight of the fort. On its approach, the garrison, contrary to expectation, set fire to all their out works and buildings, and abandoned them without making the least resistance.

The diligence of the British army was such, that by the fifth of July, it had established every post necessary to invest the fort completely, and to cut off its communication on every side.

The neglect and imprudence of the garrison, in not securing Sugar-hill, was now manifest. Notwithstanding its steepness, a road was made up to its very summit, which was levelled for the construction of a battery.

On sight of these preparations, a council was held by the American commanders; in which it was represented, that their whole effective force was not sufficient to man one half of the works; and that as it was not possible for it to remain upon continual duty, no effectual defence could be made; that as the place would be completely surrounded in twenty-four hours, it ought immediately to be abandoned, in order to save the troops. This representation being admitted by the council, the fort was evacuated that very night. The baggage, and what artillery and stores could be carried off, were sent away by water to Skenesborough, a place to the south of Lake George; while the troops took the road to it by land.

As soon as morning discovered their flight, they July 6, were immediately pursued. General Burgoyne followed them by water, after destroying the boom and bridge, which the Americans had constructed to prevent the passage of any shipping from Lake Champlain to Lake George. It had cost them, besides a prodigious expence, near a whole twelvemonths labour; but it was so quickly demolished

demolished by the seamen belonging to the British squadron, that the passage was completely cleared before nine in the morning for the largest frigates. The pursuit was continued with such expedition, that before three in the afternoon, the van of the squadron came up with the gallies that guarded the boats with the baggage. Two of them were taken, and three blown up. Hereupon the enemy set fire to their boats, and then to the works and other constructions at Skeneborough Falls, where they landed; after which they retired to the woods.

This was a total and decisive defeat: they lost all their baggage, ammunition, stores, and provisions. The boats that contained them, were all consumed, to the number of two hundred. The artillery taken from them, was no less than one hundred and thirty pieces.

The main body that had set out by land for Skeneborough, was closely pursued by General July 7, Frazer. He overtook it on the second 1777. day of its march, at five in the morning. Expecting to be attacked, the enemy had taken a strong post. The provincials were commanded by Colonel Francis, one of the best officers in their service. He had chosen his ground so judiciously, that notwithstanding the great conduct and intrepidity with which he was attacked by General Frazer, he maintained his post with success, till General Reidesel arrived at the head of a large body of Germans. Until the coming up of this reinforcement, the superiority of number was so large on the side of the Americans, that they had almost overpowered General Frazer; but they now could stand their ground no longer. Their commander being slain, whose courage and steadiness had enabled them to make so strong and resolute a defence, they were entirely broken, and fled precipitately on all sides.

Besides Colonel Francis, many other officers were killed, and above two hundred soldiers: as many were made prisoners, with seventeen officers, including a Colonel. Their wounded were more than six hundred, many of whom flying to the woods, perished there for want of necessaries, and through inability to quit them in their helpless condition. The loss of the Royal army on this occasion was not considerable; only one officer of note was killed, Major Grant, a very brave and deserving man in his profession.

General Sinclair, with the van of the American army, was now at Castletown, about six miles distant from the place of the engagement. Upon intelligence of Colonel Francis being slain, and his party defeated, together with the disaster at Skeneborough Falls, apprehending that he should be intercepted, if he proceeded towards fort Anne, he thought it safest to repair to the woods, that lie in the intermediate space between that fort and the contiguous parts of New England.

After taking possession of Skeneborough, General Burgoyne detached Colonel Hill, with the ninth regiment, towards fort Anne, in order to waylay such of the enemy as were retreating to that place. On his march thither, he fell in with a body of the enemy, near six times as numerous as his own. They attacked him with great fury, and endeavoured to surround him: this obliged him to withdraw to a more advantageous situation, in order to prevent them from executing their design. He changed his ground accordingly, with so much judgment, and with such exactness of discipline, and coolness of valour, that after an attack that lasted three hours, and was supported with great vigour, the enemy was obliged to retire with so much loss, that despairing, after so severe a repulse, to be able to make

make any stand at fort Anne, they set it on fire, and withdrew to fort Edward on the river Hudson.

In all these different engagements, though some of them were very warm, and the conflict spiritedly maintained by the enemy, yet the loss in killed and wounded did not exceed two hundred men, on the side of the Royal army.

These successes had a prodigious effect on the minds of those who obtained them. They made no doubt of carrying them to the utmost extent of their wishes and intents. On the other hand it highly alarmed the Americans, and rendered them extremely anxious what measures to take in order to stop the progress of the victorious army, which now threatened to overrun all the northern Colonies.

In the midst of this good fortune, it was no small mortification to General Burgoyne, that he could not improve it with that diligence which was requisite to make it complete. He was now under the necessity of tarrying at Skeneborough, till the arrival of the tents, field equipage, and provisions.

That no time, however, might be lost, indefatigable labour was exerted in clearing passages, and making roads through the country about fort Anne, in order to proceed against the enemy. The same diligence was used in removing the fallen trees and the stones sunk in the water, with the many other obstacles thrown by the enemy along the extent of Wood Creek, the stream that flows from fort Anne to Lake George. This was a tedious, but necessary work, as it was through this channel the stores, artillery, and all the heavy incumbrances were to be conveyed. The same fatigue was undergone in bringing the gun, and the provision boats over land, from the various lakes, creeks, and rivers, into others. The toil was astonishing; but the spirit that accompanied it was not less.

While General Burgoyne was accelerating the preparations requisite to pursue his expedition, the American General, Schuyler, was at fort Edward, employed in collecting the militia from all the adjacent parts, in order to compose a force sufficient to make a stand at this place. Hither the broken remains of the defeated army, repaired with their General, after taking a week's circuit through the woods, in order to avoid the British detachments that were exploring the country. They had suffered great distress from want of provisions, and necessities to shelter them from the continual rains that fell during their march.

The country between Skeneborough and fort Edward, was so interspersed with woods, creeks, and morasses, and the natural difficulties had been so industriously augmented by every impediment which the enemy could contrive, that it was with the utmost pains and fatigue, the Royal army was able to work a passage through it. Immense trees felled for that purpose, intersected all the roads and paths, and the watry grounds and marshes were so thickly spread, that it was necessary to construct no less than forty bridges to cross them. One of these bridges extended near two miles.

General Burgoyne's march through this wilderness, met with very little impediment from the American troops. They attacked his people while at work to remove the obstructions they had continually to encounter; but as they were no more than straggling detachments, they could make no impression, and were easily repulsed.

It was not, however, till the end of July, that he reached fort Edward. The distance from this place, to that where he begun so laborious a march, was small; but the obstacles were such, that it was an object of astonishment, how he could arrive thither in so short a time.

Another

Another route might have been taken, less subject to so many difficulties. He might have returned to Ticonderoga, and proceeded by Lake George to the fort of that name, situated at its head. From thence the road to fort Edward, is broad and firm enough to admit of wheel carriages. But as the greatness of the difficulties did not appear at first, and the return to Ticonderoga might have been construed as a retreat, the apprehension of cooling the ardour of his own people by such a movement, on the one hand, and of reviving the spirits of the Americans on the other, made it seem more eligible to surmount the hardships that presented themselves in this arduous undertaking, than to suffer the enemy to say, that he had shrunk from it out of dread of the opposition he expected on their part.

To this it was added, that the resistance which would probably have been made at fort George, might have occasioned no less delay, than the measure which was adopted ; but that when the garrison of that place perceived its retreat must be wholly cut off by the Royal army's present line of march, it would not dare to remain in that post. They abandoned it accordingly, after burning the vessels they had on the Lake, and retired to fort Edward ; the garrison of which followed their example, and withdrew to Saratoga, as soon as they were apprized of the British army's approach.

Thus, after struggling with an immense variety of toil and obstructions, General Burgoyne found himself at last on the banks of Hudson's river, so long the object of his earnest wishes. He was now in possession of all the country between fort Edward and the city of Quebec. His communication was open and free from all interruption, with the posts he had settled along that vast extent. A large quantity of stores and provisions was already arrived at fort Gorge, for the use of his army, which was now

employed in convoying them from that place, together with the artillery, the boats, and other heavy incumbrances that were necessary for their further progress.

Notwithstanding the general consternation that was now spread throughout New England, the people did not express the least inclination to offer terms of submission to the conqueror. In the midst of the terrors and anxiety which the advancing of so formidable an army occasioned, their attention was wholly occupied with the methods of making an effectual resistance.

The Provincial assemblies behaved on this occasion with a firmness and presence of mind, which lost sight of none of the resources that were left them : they were still many. The extensive tracts that lay between them and the British army, afforded innumerable situations to retard its motions, and the hardships with which it had already been obliged to contend, and at such pains to surmount, were an ample earnest of the difficulty it would still find in penetrating further. The lapse of time taken up in this manner, would allow them full leisure to put themselves in readiness to meet the enemy upon advantageous terms, when he could no longer be avoided.

In pursuance of this, the militia was raised every where, and drafts made out of it to join the forces at Saratoga. The readiness and number of those who turned out as volunteers upon this occasion, was remarkable, and was considered as an omen of the most auspicious nature, as it shewed they by no means dispaired of the cause ; and that in case of necessity, supplies of men would not be wanting. By these means their troops at Saratoga began to recover from the apprehensions with which the successes of the British army had struck them, and to exert themselves in thwarting its operations.

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In order to give them further encouragement, they placed an officer at their head, in whom the American troops, from his tried courage and capacity, justly placed the highest confidence. This was General Arnold. He repaired to Saratoga with a good train of artillery, and took the command greatly to their satisfaction.

Intelligence was brought to him upon his arrival, that Colonel St. Leger, who had been detached upon a separate expedition to the Mohawk river, had made an alarming progress there, and if not checked, would become a dangerous neighbour, as he would be soon at hand to co-operate with, as well as to receive assistance from General Burgoyne.

To obviate this danger, General Arnold removed from Saratoga to Still-water, a place lying midway between Saratoga and the junction of the Mohawk river with that of Hudson.

In the mean time, the apprehensions of those who had been averse to the employing of the Indians in the British army, began to be justified. Notwithstanding the care and precautions taken by General Burgoyne to prevent the effects of their barbarous disposition, they were sometimes carried to an excess, that shocked his humanity the more, as it was totally out of his power to controul them in the degree that he had hoped and proposed. The outrages they committed, were such as proved highly detrimental to the Royal cause. They spared neither friend nor foe, and exercised their usual cruelties with very little attention to the threats that were held out in order to restrain and deter them.

Several instances of this nature happened about that time, which contributed powerfully to alienate the minds of many from the cause in which they served. One was recorded in particular, that equally struck both parties with horror. A young lady, the daughter of Mr. Macrea, a zealous Royalist,

alist, being on her way to the British army, where she was to have been married to an officer, unhappily fell into the hands of the Indians, who, without regarding her youth and beauty, murdered her with many circumstances of barbarity.

Scenes of this nature served to render the Royal party extremely odious. However the Americans might be conscious that they were as offensive, and as much abhorred by their enemies, as by themselves, still they could not forgive them the accepting of such auxiliaries, as must necessarily disgrace the best cause.

The resentment occasioned by the conduct of the Indians, and no less the dread of being exposed to their fury, helped considerably to bring recruits from every quarter to the American army. It was considered as the only place of refuge and security at present. The inhabitants of the tracts contiguous to the British army, took up arms almost universally. The preservation of their families was now become an object of immediate concern. As the country was populous, they flocked in multitudes to General Arnold's camp ; and he soon found himself at the head of an army, which, though composed of militia, and undisciplined men, was animated with that spirit of indignation and revenge, which so often supplies all military deficiencies.

The Provincial Assemblies were not deceived in their expectation of those obstacles which would continue to oppose the British arms. The troops encamped along the Hudson, under General Burgoyne, were now undergoing hardships and fatigues without any prospect of alleviation. From the end of July, to the middle of August, their whole time was taken up in forwarding the boats, provisions, and many other necessaries, both for subsistence and warlike operations, from fort George to their camp on Hudson's river. The distance was not great

great, being no more than twenty miles; but the labour was excessive, and very discouraging from the little effect it produced: the roads in many places lay through vast steeps, and in others had been damaged or destroyed. A very small proportion of the horses was come, that were to have been furnished in Canada: they were unavoidably retarded by the length and perpetual difficulties of a journey, that was to be taken through such an unceasing and perplexing vicissitude of mountains, forests, lakes, swamps, and rivers, scattered along a country, in many parts uncultivated and wild. No more than about one hundred oxen had been procured, of which it was necessary to employ ten and sometimes twelve, to draw a single batteau, so heavy and deep the roads were become, through the excessive wetness of the season. In fifteen days of the hardest labour, no more than ten boats were got afloat in Hudson's river, and there was only four days provision before-hand in the camp. Thus it began to be apprehended, that it would prove utterly impracticable to form a magazine sufficient to supply the army with provisions during the future operations of the campaign, as they found it so difficult to provide for its daily subsistence.

This want of resources was an equal motive of discouragement to the British army, and of encouragement to the Americans. It was not doubted among them, that this alone would be an unsurmountable impediment, and totally obviate the exertions that would otherwise have resulted from the British General's well-known abilities and valour.

While he was pondering in what manner to remedy these alarming pressures, he was informed that Colonel St. Leger had penetrated as far as Fort Stanwix, and was closely besieging it. This suggested an idea of moving forward instantly. Were the enemy to retire to the Mohawk river, he would then be placed between the army under his command,

mand, and the forces under Colonel St. Leger, and liable to an attack from either side. By such a retreat the road would also lie open to Albany, between which and the American army, his own would then have an opportunity of posting itself.— In this situation the American General would be compelled either to fight him, or to cross the Hudson, in order to secure his retreat into New England. But should he, on the British army's advancing in the manner proposed, withdraw directly towards Albany, the country on the Mohawk would lie open, and he might form a junction with Colonel St. Leger, to the manifest advantage of whatever attempts they might think proper to make conjointly.

Such was the plan conceived by General Burgoyne in the present juncture. But the obstructions to the executing of it, or almost any other, still continued. The communication with Fort George was necessary to be preserved at all events, and at whatever distance he advanced. But the number of troops that would be requisite to form so long a chain of communication, and to guard the convoys of provisions, and other necessaries, on their way to the main body, would so weaken his army, as to render its strength totally inadequate to any great exertions; and unless the numbers thus employed were considerable, they would be ineffectual, as a strong body of the enemy lay within a few hour's march, ready upon the first opportunity, to intercept any party that was not of some force.

This want of necessaries was the more mortifying, as the Provincial camp was furnished with them in the greatest abundance. Its supplies came from the frontiers of New England, to a place called Bennington, little more than twenty miles distant from the banks of the Hudson. Here a copious magazine had been formed for the Provincial army, from which they drew their necessaries when

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they were wanted. It was well guarded by a numerous body of militia.

This magazine lying at no great distance, General Burgoyne formed the design of seizing it by surprise. The possession of so considerable a supply, would enable him to proceed without any delay towards the enemy, and to prosecute the main object of his expedition.

He selected for this business Colonel Baum, a German officer of great bravery, who set out at the head of five hundred men, two hundred of whom were Germans, of his own chusing. To be ready at hand for the support of this party, the army marched up the eastern shore of the Hudson river, and encamped almost abreast of Saratoga, with the river between it and that place. An advanced party was posted at Batten Kill, lying between the camp and Bennington, in order to support that of Colonel Baum.

At the time he set forward, a detachment of the enemy was conducting a large supply of cattle and provision to their camp; these he seized, and sent to the British quarters. He could not, however, proceed with that expedition which was necessary to surprize the enemy, from the badness of the roads, and other deficiencies. They discovered his design, and they prepared to receive him.

Being informed that their force was greatly superior to his, he halted, and having taken an advantageous position, he sent notice of his situation to the General, who dispatched Colonel Breyman to his assistance. This officer hastened with all speed to the support of his countryman; but the same cause that had prevented Colonel Baum from surprising the Provincials, now prevented Colonel Breyman from arriving in time to assist him: the continual rains had so deepened the roads, that the artillery could hardly be got forward, and the detachment

tachment did not advance more than twenty-four miles from eight in the morning, to four in the afternoon of the following day.

General Starke, who commanded at Bennington, with Colonel Warner, on receiving intelligence of the respective situation of both parties, saw the necessity of attacking the first, before it could effect a junction with the last. He advanced upon Colonel Baum with the utmost diligence, and inclosed him on all sides. A body of Provincial Loyalists, who made part of his detachment, on the approach of the Americans, would have persuaded him that they were Loyalists like themselves, coming up to join him; but their mistake was soon discovered. The defences he had hastily raised were forced, after a valiant resistance, and the greatest part of his detachment, overpowered by numbers, made the best of their way to the woods.— But he was so completely surrounded with his countrymen, that they found it impossible to escape.— In this situation, after expending all their ammunition, they drew their sabres, and bravely charged the Americans, with the Colonel at their head. But fortune did not second their valour; they were borne down by superiority of number, and were all either killed or taken, with their Colonel, who did not surrender till he was wounded and disabled.

Unhappily for Colonel Breyman, he was at this time pushing forwards, in order to join the defeated party, the disaster of which he had no information of. It was about four in the afternoon when he reached the ground on which the engagement had happened, and found himself assailed on all sides. Though his men were much harassed and fatigued, they received the enemy with great spirit, repulsed and drove them from their posts; but their superior multitude enabling them to pour in fresh reinforcements, they recovered their ground,

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and compelled Breyman's party to retire. This, however, they did not do till they had fired forty rounds a man, after which, wanting ammunition, they withdrew under cover of the night.

Five or six hundred men were lost in these two actions, most of whom were made prisoners. But this loss was nothing when compared to the diminution of that dread in which the provincials had held the British and German troops until this unfortunate event. It filled them with courage, and with hope of still further successes: it taught them that regular and disciplined soldiers were not always sure of victory; it removed, in short, all their fears, and inspired them with a boldness and confidence which they had never felt till this day.

Nor was the news received by the British army without anxiety. Accustomed to success ever since the commencement of the campaign, they were not a little surprized at this unexpected check. Though it did not diminish their courage, nor abate their ardour, it somewhat cooled that unbounded confidence of victory, which had induced them to look upon the enemy with contempt.

During these transactions, Colonel St. Leger was pressing with great vigour the siege of Fort Stanwix. A convoy of provisions, with an es-

1777. cort of eight or nine hundred men, marched to its relief. The Colonel detached Sir John Johnson, with a considerable force, to way-lay them upon their march. They fell into the ambush: four hundred were slain, two hundred taken, and the remainder escaped with great difficulty.

The Colonel did not neglect this opportunity of trying to intimidate the garrison into a surrender. He represented the Provincial strength as entirely broken throughout the Northern Provinces, and that General Burgoyne had penetrated to Albany, where he was now receiving the submission of all the

the neighbouring districts. He reminded them of the danger to be apprehended from the Indians in his army, were the place to be taken by assault, and how hard a task it would be to restrain them from massacring every person that fell into their hands, in revenge for the number of their countrymen who had fallen in the attack of the convoy.

But these representations had no effect on the garrison: the Governor, Colonel Gansevoort, a very resolute man, made answer, that he would maintain the fort as long as his men would stand by him, and that he was not to be intimidated by threats from the discharge of his duty.

The Colonel was much disappointed in his expectations of the condition of Fort Stanwix. It was in a much better state of defence than it had been reported, and the garrison consisted of selected men. The number of regular troops he had with him, was not sufficient to make any impressions of terror on their minds; and the Indians, of whom great part of his force consisted, were daily becoming more ungovernable, from the dissatisfaction they felt at the loss of their countrymen in the late engagement, and the little hopes they entertained of getting any plunder, which was the only motive that induced them to join the British forces. Instead of being dispirited, the garrison, headed by Colonel Willet, the second in command, made several successful sallies. This bold and enterprising officer undertook, with one more, a most daring and dangerous attempt. He ventured out of the fort, eluded the vigilance of the enemy, and traversed a country filled with Indian parties on the look-out, in order to hasten the relief that was so much wanted.

In this disagreeable situation, a report was brought to Colonel St. Leger by the Indians, that General Arnold was approaching at the head of two thousand

sand men to attack the besiegers. Upon this he assured them, that he would give him the meeting with the British troops under his command, and that he would faithfully stand by them, if they would perform their part, and accompany him to action. To show them that he was in earnest, he took their chiefs with him to pitch upon the ground where to meet the Provincials. But while he was striving to encourage and prevail upon them to remain true to their engagements, further intelligence was brought that General Burgoyne had been defeated with great slaughter, and was now flying before the Provincial army. Hereupon numbers of the Indians immediately deserted him, and the remainder threatened to follow, if he did not himself break up the siege and retire.

A remonstrance of this nature obliged the Colonel to assent to their demands. A retreat was instantly made; but from the unhappy circumstances to which this behaviour of the Indians had reduced him, it was attended with so much precipitation and disorder, that the tents, with part of the artillery and stores, were lost. He was not without apprehensions that they harboured sinister designs respecting his own people. His fears were just;—they plundered the boats of their stores and provisions, and carried off the baggage belonging to the officers; and they robbed and massacred all the stragglers that were at a distance from the main body.—This unfortunate event happened on the twenty-second of August.

The report spread by the Indians to compel the British troops to raise the siege of Fort Stanwix, was not without foundation. General Arnold was advancing with two thousand men to attack the besiegers. He was himself, with eight or nine hundred, hastening forwards with all speed; and in order to come upon them unawares, he had traversed

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the woods, hoping to surprize them before they could make good their retreat. But he did not arrive till two days after the siege had been raised.

The failure of the expedition against Fort Stanwix, together with the defeat at Bennington, were very severe blows to the British interest in those parts. They animated the Americans to a surprising degree. They began now confidently to promise themselves that General Burgoyne himself would share the same fate as his officers.

He still continued in his camp in the neighbourhood of Saratoga, where he was exerting himself in forwarding stores, and requisites of all kinds from Lake George, intending, as soon as he had laid in a sufficient stock, to march directly in quest of the enemy, and endeavour to force his way through all obstructions.

Having, with indefatigable pains, amassed provisions, and other necessaries, in sufficient quantity to last out a month, he threw a bridge of boats on the Hudson, and crossed his army over in the middle of September, encamping it on the hills and plains about Saratoga. The enemy was then at Still-water, under the command of General Gates, an officer upon whose professional knowledge and experience the Americans placed very great dependence.

In General Burgoyne's progress towards the enemy, the woodiness of the country obstructed him continually, and the creeks and swamps were so numerous, that much of his time was taken up in constructing bridges, and in repairing those which had been destroyed. As soon as he approached the Provincial army, he determined to make an attack.— He put himself at the head of the central division of his army, General Frazer and Colonel Breyman were on his right, and Generals Philips and Reidesel

fell on his left. In this order he marched to the enemy on the nineteenth of September.

The Americans, elated with their late successes, did not upon this occasion wait to be attacked. They marched out of their camp; and advanced upon the central division, which they engaged with a firmness and resolution that had never before been experienced from them. General Arnold, lately returned from his expedition to the Mohawk river, had a principal share in the transactions of this day. At the head of a division composed of his best soldiers, he directed his attack chiefly on three regiments, the position of which exposed them most, and upon which, for that reason, he hoped to make the readier impression; these were the twentieth, twenty-first, and sixty-second. With the most intrepid and soldier-like perseverance, they maintained their ground against the repeated efforts of far superior numbers, which were continually refreshed, and assailed them with unabated fury. The burthen of the day fell upon them, and they continued engaged till sun-set. General Frazer, on the right, rendered them occasionally good service; but he could only do it by detached parties. The post he occupied was of too much consequence to be relinquished; a large body of the enemy lay in a wood fronting him, watching an opportunity to seize it.

General Philips, who commanded on the left, on hearing of the danger to which those regiments as well as the central division were exposed, pierced through a wood that lay between, and came up to their assistance at a very critical juncture. General Arnold was pressing them so vigorously, that they were almost borne down with the weight of numbers. By this seasonable help they were enabled to resist him. The artillery brought up by General Philips was of essential service upon this occasion; it did such execution among the enemy, that though

they continued the fight, it was no longer with the same violence with which it had begun. The arrival of General Reidesel, who followed General Philips, with another part of the left wing, completed the success which had been gained. He charged the enemy so effectually, that they began gradually to give way; they did not however totally retire till on the very close of day, after having maintained a well-fought action from three in the afternoon.

This was a real battle on both sides. Hitherto the Provincial troops had been cautious of engaging without the protection of works and defences; but they now came forth undauntedly, and encountered the Royal army upon equal ground. The conflict was kept up near five hours with good order, courage, and a degree of obstinacy that had never been expected, and excited, on that account, the more surprize and alarm. It was now foreseen, that instead of a flying and dispirited enemy, they would have a numerous and resolute army to encounter, equally with themselves disposed to stand their ground, and commanded by chiefs whose activity and spirit they found, from experience, would leave no advantage unimproved.

The loss on both sides was severe; but the greater number fell on that of the provincials, of whom upwards of fifteen hundred were computed to have been killed and wounded. The list of the slain and wounded in the British army did not exceed, three hundred and thirty. Among those British officers who distinguished themselves, were Generals Frazer and Hamilton, to whom much of the honours of the day were due. Captain Jones of the artillery, who was slain, did eminent service. After keeping possession of the field of battle during the night, the British army took post in the morning in front of the enemy and within cannon-shot of his lines.

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But though the day was won, this action produced detrimental consequences. The first was a visible diminution of the alacrity of the Indians in the British army. The expectations of plunder by which they had been attracted, began now to fail them entirely. They saw nothing before them but hardships and warfare. These were no motives to retain a people so little interested in the quarrel between Britain and her Colonies; and from this period they gradually deserted in such numbers, that in a short time they were almost reduced to nothing.

Little more fidelity was experienced on the part of the Canadians, or even the Colonists who had joined the British troops. They also withdrew by degrees, as soon as they began to perceive that the resistance of the Americans would prove more formidable than it had been at first expected.

These various desertions happened at a time when their fidelity and constancy were more than ever wanted, and proved the more mortifying, as an accession of strength had been promised and depended upon, from both these quarters, at the very season when they broke their word in so ignominious a manner.

But exclusive of these, other succours of much more importance had been hoped for by the British General. From the first commencement of his expedition, he had promised himself a strong reinforcement from that part of the British army which was stationed at New York. He relied on its being able to make its way to Albany, and to join him there. Such a junction, he doubted not, would have given a decisive turn to all his future operations, and completed the intent of his expedition.

In this juncture, he received a letter from Sir Henry Clinton, who then commanded in chief at New York. It was written in cypher, and through many difficulties and dangers of interception, was

at length safely conveyed to his hands. It informed him, that Sir Henry Clinton intended to make a diversion in his favour on the North River, by an attack on Fort Montgomery, and other places of strength, lately constructed by the Provincials, in order to bar the passage to Albany.

This intelligence did not hold out such effectual assistance as General Burgoyne had kept in view; nevertheless it afforded him hope, that by such a diversion as was proposed, General Gates would be compelled to make large detachments from his army, in order to oppose the operations on the North River: this would, of course, weaken that General's army, and facilitate the progress of his own.

In return to the letter he had received, he dispatched to Sir Henry Clinton, some trusty persons, secretly, and in disguise, and who all went by different ways, with a full account of his present situation; urging him to a speedy execution of the diversion he had proposed, and informing him that he was provided with sufficient necessaries, to hold out in his present position, till about the middle of October; till which time he was determined to maintain it, in expectation of a change of circumstances in his favour.

The American army under General Gates, was in the mean time continually encroaching, through the arrival of all the militia, and continental troops that could possibly be spared. The New England people were duly conscious how much their all was at stake, and were at the same time persuaded that an opportunity was now presenting itself, which, if judiciously managed, would prove one of the most auspicious that fortune had yet thrown into their hands for the benefit of the common cause.

In this idea nothing was omitted to improve it to the utmost. Exclusive of the troops and militia, volunteers of all ranks appeared on this occasion, and

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a warmth for the service of the public was manifested, that entirely banished from the minds of people all doubt of success, and excited a full persuasion, that the British army would be compelled to retire, and that the hopes in which Britain had been so sanguine, of reducing the New England Provinces, would be completely frustrated.

Such were the clear expectations of all the Americans in those parts. But the Generals who commanded the army that was now opposed to General Burgoyne, began to conceive much higher hopes. The concurrence of circumstances was such, as laid before them the practicability of rendering the various obstructions, that had so powerfully retarded the progress of the British army, no less impedimental in its return,

This idea was further confirmed by the impossibility of the British army's moving forwards in its present condition, and the determination it seemed to have taken of acting solely on the defensive, until such an alteration of affairs happened, as would enable it to act otherwise. But of this they had no apprehension. General Washington in the middle provinces, though defeated, still maintained his ground with the greatest vigour; and the country between New York and Albany, where it was known that General Burgoyne expected a diversion in his favour, was at that time well guarded, and in a perfect state of defence, wherever an attack was apprehended.

General Burgoyne himself no longer looked upon the expedition he had been sent upon, with the same hope he had cherished when it began. He saw a numerous enemy gathering round him from all quarters, whose force was hourly augmenting, while his own had been considerably diminished by large desertions, and frequent losses in battle, and was from the same causes daily decreasing. He now

found it necessary to fortify his camp, and to construct strong works for the protection of his magazines and hospitals, which he had not a sufficiency of troops to guard without such an additional security, should he judge it necessary to come to an engagement, or make an attempt of any consequence upon the enemy.

While he was in this embrassed situation, a project was formed by the New England people, to penetrate to the Lakes by the western frontiers of New Hampshire, and the upper countries on the Connecticut river, and to cut off his communication with Canada, by reposessing themselves of Ticonderoga, and the other forts and passes in that country.

General Lincoln was placed at the head of the expedition ; and the Colonels Brown, Johnston, and Woodbury, men of known courage and activity, were appointed to act under his directions. They set out each with about five hundred men, and conducted the enterprize with so much skilfulness and secrecy, that they surprized all the out-posts in the neighbourhood of Ticonderoga, taking a great number of prisoners and boats, together with some armed vessels. They summoned Brigadier Powel, who commanded at Ticonderoga, to surrender, and upon his refusal, made several attacks upon the fort, though without success,

In the mean time the situation of the British army, under General Burgoyne, was becoming daily more critical. From the uncertainty of receiving supplies of provisions, he was obliged, in the beginning of October, to diminish the army's allowance. To this measure, from its necessity, they submitted with the most exemplary acquiescence.

The twelfth of October was approaching. This was the term till which the army was to tarry in its present encampment. The seventh was already arrived ; and no tidings came of the operations that had

had been proposed for its relief. In this alarming state of things, the General, preserving the intrepidity of his character, resolved upon a movement towards the enemy.

He advanced accordingly upon the left wing of the Provincial army, in order to reconnoitre the ground it occupied; intending, if it was found practicable, to force his way forward through that quarter, or to secure it for the purpose of a retreat, if that should appear necessary.

The body of troops employed for this purpose, consisted of fifteen hundred men. It was all that could with safety be drawn from the guard of the camp, in the present reduced state of the army. The force of the enemy in front of that which remained for its defence, was more than double to it.

This detachment advanced within a mile of the Oct. 7, enemy's left wing; but was prevented 1777. from proceeding any further, by a sudden and impetuous attack made upon the British left. Major Ackland, at the head of the grenadiers, received the enemy with great resolution. A body of Germans, posted near the British grenadiers, was preparing to come to their relief; but the enemy's superiority of number enabling them to extend their front, the Germans themselves were attacked, and with difficulty stood their ground. Some even gave way.

General Burgoyne, on perceiving their distress, ordered a reinforcement to hasten to their assistance from the right. It was brought up with all speed by General Frazer, and preserved them from being entirely broken; but this brave officer was slain upon that occasion.

The danger to which the detachment was exposed from this unexpected attack on the left, compelled it to retire; though not without great difficulty.

A large party of the enemy endeavoured to cut off its retreat, and the most desperate efforts were necessary to secure it.

The troops had hardly regained the camp, when it was assaulted with the greatest fury. The attack was principally directed against the post occupied by the light infantry under Lord Belcarras. But it was defended with great spirit. The enemy, led on by General Arnold, behaved after his example, with the utmost vigour and courage; but in the moment he was on the point of forcing his way into the entrenchments, he received a dangerous wound; and his party unable to overcome the obstinate resistance they met with, were at length completely repulsed.

But they succeeded in the attack they made on the entrenchments of the German reserve on the right, Colonel Breyman was killed after a valiant defence, and his countrymen routed with great slaughter; and the loss of their artillery and baggage. This proved a heavy misfortune. It gave the enemy an opening on the right and rear of the British army. Thus ended this unfortunate engagement, which was maintained with such obstinacy, that it lasted till night put an end to it.

The losses sustained by the British army upon this day, were truly fatal; that of General Frazer was deeply regretted by the whole army: his personal and professional character were equally eminent. The list of the killed and wounded amounted, exclusive of the Germans, to near twelve hundred, among whom were seventy officers. The same list on the side of the Americans, was much greater: General Lincoln was among the wounded, as well as General Arnold.

The advantages obtained by the enemy, rendered the position of the British army so dangerous, that it was judged necessary to alter it that very night,

night, in order to reduce the enemy to the necessity of changing also their own disposition,

This bold, but requisite movement, was executed with great order, and without any loss. The artillery, the camp, and its appurtenances, were all removed before morning, to a more convenient Oct. 8, ground, where the British General continued to offer battle to the enemy the whole 1777. of the succeeding day.

But he did not remain long in his new position; the American Generals now entertained the most sanguine hope of overcoming the British army without exposing themselves to the risk of another battle. They took every measure to surround and press it in such a manner, as to cut off all communication, and deprive it of all supplies.

To this intent they advanced in great force, proposing to turn his right wing, which would have effectually inclosed him. On intelligence of this motion, he saw the necessity of removing instantly, and determined to retire towards Saratoga. The army began accordingly to move at nine that very evening; and though within musket shot of the enemy, and incumbered with all its baggage, it retreated without loss. The only retardment was occasioned by heavy rains, and the difficulty of guarding the boats which carried the provisions.

The principal mortification upon this occasion, arose from the necessity of abandoning the hospital with the sick and wounded. They fell of course into the hands of the American General, who treated them with great kindness and humanity.

On its arrival at Saratoga, the army found that the Americans had stationed a great force to impede its passage over the Hudson's river, of which they occupied the principal ford,

As the only method of effecting a retreat, was by securing a passage to Lake George, a detachment of

of workmen was dispatched, strongly escorted, to repair the bridges, and clear the road to fort Edward. But the enemy seeming to prepare for an attack, the force that guarded the workmen was recalled; and being left without protection, they were obliged to abandon the work.

The banks of Hudson's river, opposite to those occupied by the British army, were covered with American marksmen, who kept a perpetual fire upon those who had the charge of the provision boats belonging to the British army. Many of them were taken. In order to secure the provisions, it was found requisite to land and convey them to the camp. This was not done however without difficulty and loss.

Several councils of war were now held on the most practicable means of effecting a retreat to fort Edward. The only method that seemed practicable in any respect, was attended with such danger, as afforded but little hope of its succeeding. This was to march to it by night: the soldiers carrying the provisions upon their backs, and leaving the baggage, and every other incumbrance behind, and to force a passage at the fords, either at, or above that fort.

But while the army was preparing to carry this bold, but desperate scheme into execution, the scouts that had been dispatched to explore the motions of the enemy, returned with an account that they had cast up strong entrenchments opposite those fords, and had taken possession of the high ground between fort Edward and fort George, and raised defences well provided with cannon. Their parties were extended every where along the opposite shore of the Hudson, keeping a continual look out on every part of the river, where the least possibility of a passage was apprehended. Some had even crossed it to watch more narrowly the motions of the British army.

army. Thus the least movement it made was immediately discovered.

In the mean while, the American army was hourly encreasing. Exclusive of their troops and militia, their camp was continually filling by the numbers that came on every side, to act as volunteers, and to share in the honour of destroying the British army, or forcing it to surrender. One of these alternatives was deemed inevitable. The force under General Gates amounted at this time to upwards of fifteen thousand men, while that under General Burgoyne, was so diminished, as hardly to consist of three thousand five hundred, fit for actual service.

No doubt was any longer entertained that the American General would succeed in the design he had projected. But notwithstanding all these advantages, this cautious officer, fully conscious of what exertions the British troops were capable in a desperate exigency, took as many precautions against this handful of men, as if the superiority lay on their side. The ground on which he was encamped, was, from its nature, and the works he had thrown up, inattackable, and it almost inclosed the British army.

In this perilous situation, it posted itself in the best manner that was practicable, fortifying the camp, and preparing for any attempt the enemy might, from its weak condition, be prompted to make. The men lay continually upon their arms, expecting hourly to be attacked : the cannonading from the enemy was incessant ; and their rifle and grape shot reached every part of the camp.

The courage and constancy of the British troops in the midst of this arduous trial, was astonishing. They still retained their spirits, in hope that either the long looked for relief might arrive, or that the enemy

enemy might give them an opportunity of fighting.

The thirteenth of October was now come. This was the day until which it had been determined to endure all extremities, in maintaining their ground against the enemy. After waiting all the day, in anxious expectation of what it would produce, no prospect of assistance appearing, and no reasonable hope of any remaining; it was thought proper in the evening, to take an exact account of the provisions left. They amounted, upon short allowance, to no more than three days subsistence a man.

In this state of distress, surrounded by more than four times his number, and cut off from all means of retreat, the British General called a council of war; to which all the Generals, Field Officers, and Captains commanding corps, were summoned. Their unanimous opinion was, that in the present circumstances, they could do no otherwise than treat with the enemy.

In consequence of this determination, a messenger was sent the next morning to notify it to the American General, and to lay those terms before him, upon which the British General would consent to treat.

The terms that were offered, evinced a spirit and sense of honour in the British commander, which no pressures could subdue. Nor were sentiments of generosity wanting in the American General. Being himself a native of Britain, it is not improbable that, though engaged in the cause of America, he still retained those feelings for the reputation of his country, of which, it has long been observed, that military men, more than all others, are never willing to divest themselves, though in arms against it.

A convention was settled, the articles of which were, that the British army should march out of its lines

lines with all the honours of war, and accompanied by its field artillery, to a place agreed, where they should pile their arms, by word of command from their own officers.

A free passage to Great Britain was allowed them, on condition of not serving again in America during the present war.

The army was not to be separated, and the officers were to be at liberty to assemble the soldiers for roll calling, and other necessary purposes of regularity.

All individuals belonging to the army, were to retain their private property, upon delivering up the public stores; and no baggage was to be searched or molested.

The officers were to be admitted on their parole, to wear their side arms, and to be quartered according to their rank.

All persons following the camp, and employed in the service of the army, of whatever country, or denomination, were to be included in this convention.

Such Canadians as had attended the army, were to be permitted to return to their country, subject to the same conditions.

The British commander was to have the liberty of sending dispatches unopened to Great Britain, Canada, and New York.

Such were the articles of capitulation agreed upon between the British and American Generals. When the forlorn situation of the British army is duly considered, and that no possibility appeared of its being able to effect a retreat, it must be allowed that the American General acted with great moderation.

It must also be admitted, on the other hand, that the firmness and resolution displayed on this occasion,

fion, by the British General, were no less conducive in obtaining honourable terms.

It had been proposed at first, by the American General, that the British troops should be drawn up in their encampment, and there ordered to ground their arms. But such a proposal was rejected without an instant's hesitation. General Burgoyne sent immediately a message to General Gates, to acquaint him, that unless he receded from this demand, all treaty should end at once; that the British troops were to a man determined to proceed to any act of desperation sooner than submit to it, and should that evening consider the cessation of arms that had been agreed upon for the purpose of treating, as entirely at an end.

So intrepid a message, delivered upon cool deliberation, in such circumstances of distress, by men whom the American army considered at its mercy, convinced General Gates that it would be wiser to yield up the point of honour, than to contend for it with men who were so justly entitled to it, and so firmly resolved not to recede. It showed him, too, that terms of rigour would not be accepted by such men, and that the only safe method of preserving his advantages, was to use them with moderation.

On the seventeenth of October, at nine in the morning, the British army marched out of its lines, and deposited its arms at the place appointed. A memorable instance of magnanimity and military politeness is said to have happened on this occasion, and which reflected much honour on the character of General Gates. Sensible of the mortification attending such a reverse of fortune, and unwilling to aggravate it by any circumstance that might prove offensive to the British troops, in their present calamity, he kept the American soldiery within their camp, while the British army was piling its arms, that

that it might not have them for spectators of so humiliating a transaction.

The number of those who laid down their arms amounted, according to the American accounts, to five thousand seven hundred and fifty, including the irregulars, Canadians, and all the people following the camp. The list of sick and wounded, left in the camp when the army retreated to Saratoga, consisted of five hundred and twenty-eight. Exclusive of the above, the numbers of killed, wounded, taken, and deserted, of British, German, and Canadian troops, from the sixth of July, when the campaign was opened by the taking of Ticonderoga, to the seventeenth of October, when it closed by the convention of Saratoga, were computed at near three thousand.

The stores and implements of war that fell into the hands of the Americans, were very considerable. The artillery consisted of thirty-five brass field-pieces; there were seven thousand stands of arms, besides cloathing for a like number, the tents and military chest, and a variety of other articles much wanted by the Americans.

Such was the fate of the expedition under General Burgoyne.—It had been undertaken with the greatest prospect of success, from the goodness of the troops, and the excellence of the commanders; but the difficulties, though partly foreseen, were not expected to be such as they proved in reality.—When they were duly taken into consideration, it was the opinion of very competent judges, that the progress made by the British army, amidst such a complication of impediments and distresses, was truly wonderful in every respect; and that its failure at last was not so surprising, as the perseverance and spirit with which it struggled with obstructions and hardships, which, it soon became evident

evident to every man in the army, would, in all probability, prove finally insurmountable.

While these misfortunes attended the British arms in the interior parts of New England, they were more successful in other quarters. In pursuance of the notice sent to General Burgoyne, Sir Henry Clinton was employed in an expedition up the North River, in order to make a diversion in his favour. The force under his command consisted of three thousand men; and he was accompanied by Commodore Hotham, with a considerable number of ships of war and armed vessels. Their intention was to reduce forts Montgomery and Clinton, two places of strength, but rather at present in a state of unguardedness, from the necessity of unfurnishing every post to reinforce the army that was opposing General Burgoyne, and from the little apprehension of an attempt upon them.

For this reason it was determined to attack them by surprize. They were situated opposite to each other, on the sides of a creek that came down from the mountains to the North River, and they communicated with each other by a bridge over the creek. In order to effect the intended surprize, several feints were made, and the troops were landed at a considerable distance from the forts, to which they proceeded in two separate divisions. After a long and difficult march through a mountainous country, they both arrived at the same time, each on that side of the creek where the fort stood which it was respectively to attack.

By this unexpected appearance of the troops by land, and the sudden arrival of the shipping up the creek, the garrisons were equally surprised and terrified. The gallies came up so close as to strike the very walls with their oars. The assault on both the forts was so impetuous and animated, that though a courageous defence was made, they were taken by

by storm, with no inconsiderable slaughter of the garrisons;

The loss of these forts was attended by that of two large frigates, and other vessels, which were set on fire by the enemy, to prevent their being taken. Fort Constitution; another place of some strength, was, on the approach of the British troops and shipping, destroyed in the same manner. Continental Village, a place lately settled, and in a thriving condition, was at the same time committed to the flames, by a party under Governor Tryon. This was in particular a severe loss; as, exclusive of other advantages, it was conveniently situated for military operations, and had barracks for near two thousand men.

This expedition was very detrimental to the Americans. Seventy large pieces of cannon were taken from them in the forts, besides a large quantity of smaller artillery, and of warlike stores and provisions. A large boom and chain, reaching across the river from Fort Montgomery, to a point of land called St. Anthony's Nose, was in part destroyed, and partly carried away. It was supposed to have cost seventy thousand pounds, and was looked upon as a work of great industry and labour. Another boom of not much inferior value was destroyed near Fort Constitution.

In these different attacks, the loss on the British side was small in number, but some officers of great merit were killed: Colonel Campbell fell in the assault of Fort Montgomery, where he was principal in command, and by his judicious disposition greatly contributed to its being taken. Majors Sill and Grant, two excellent officers, were also slain; as was Count Grabousky, a Polish nobleman of distinguished bravery, and aid-de-camp to Sir Henry Clinton.

Sir James Wallace, with some frigates, and General Vaughan, with a body of troops on board some transports, proceeded farther up the river to Esopus, a very flourishing and considerable place. Here the Americans had thrown up works, and seemed determined to make a resolute defence.—General Vaughan landing his troops, attacked their batteries, and took or spiked all their guns. The chief damage they sustained on this occasion, was the destruction of the town of Esopus, which was reduced to ashes.

The devastation and ruin of the places that took place in these expeditions up the North River, were causes of great irritation among the Americans.—They complained that while a generous capitulation was granted to the army under General Burgoyne, the British troops at that very time were carrying fire and desolation wherever they had it in their power. General Gates on this occasion wrote a very severe and expostulating letter to General Vaughan.

In order, at the same time, to put a stop to the progress of the British arms in this quarter, he repaired to the banks of the North River with a very powerful body of the American regulars; but before he could reach it, the British troops had completed the intent of their expedition. They had dismantled the forts, and demolished all the works along the river.

But these were small losses in comparison to those which Britain had sustained in the course of this unfortunate campaign, and served rather to exasperate, than to distress the Americans, who considered them as the effects of rage and disappointment.

Great was the grief and dejection experienced, and unfeignedly expressed in Britain, upon receiving the heavy tidings of the fate of the British army under

Under General Burgoyne. The sorrow felt upon this occasion was equal to the surprize it excited; and this was the greater, as victory and conquest, in their fullest extent, had been the sanguine and hourly expectation from that part of America where he commanded. His courage, his military abilities, his zeal in the cause,—all these added to his first successes, had raised his character, and that of his troops, so high, that it was imagined nothing could stand before them, and that all the north of America would unquestionably be subdued before the end of the campaign.

The intelligence of his success had renewed the former insinuations of want of spirit and capacity in the Americans. They even suffered in the estimation of those who wished well to their cause. It began to be apprehended among their warmest partisans, that they would at last be compelled to that unconditional submission which had been rejected with so much disdain in America, and which their friends in Britain dreaded the consequences of no less than themselves, from their fear of the danger that might result from it to the constitution at home.

To these, the news of the convention at Saratoga, though highly disagreeable, when viewed in the light of a national disgrace, was no less acceptable when considered as a prevention of those perils to which the freedom of this country would, in their opinion, have been exposed, had the expedition succeeded according to the wishes of the adverse party.

To those European states and nations who from habit, prejudice, or envy, had so long been desirous of the downfall of British grandeur, the intelligence of what had befallen the British army at Saratoga, was a matter of open and unconcealed exultation. It was universally received among them as the defeat and ruin of

Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, at the battle of Pultowa, had formerly been by those powers whom that terrible warrior had so long kept in awe. All the foes to Britain began now to consult in what manner they should improve such an event to their own advantage, and to her further detriment.

France, in particular, interested herself, on this occasion, in a manner that plainly indicated she would not long conceal the projects that were then in agitation in her councils. Her ministers were the readier to espouse the cause of the Americans, as herein they would coincide with the general views and desires of the nation at large. Exclusive of the national and hereditary inveteracy of the French to the English, they considered them, in the present case, as acting an unjustifiable part in respect of the Americans. They looked upon themselves, therefore, as doubly authorised to assist them; they were prompted by motives of policy, and equally by those of justice.

Influenced by these principles, people of all ranks and denominations exerted themselves in their favour. But it was principally among the military classes this ardour was eminently conspicuous. The Irish Brigade, so famous for the services it had rendered France, especially in its wars with England, furnished a number of brave officers to America: nor were the other French regiments deficient in this spirit of general adventure in the cause of the British Colonies against their parent state.

Numbers of the young nobility in France were eager to signalize themselves on this occasion; but none exerted himself so conspicuously as the Marquis de la Fayette, a young nobleman of the first rank and fortune. Impelled by that enthusiastic ardour which arises from a liberal education, and a native generosity of sentiments, he embarked in the cause of America from a conviction that it was a just one,

one, and that they were contending for rights to which they had an evident claim. In this persuasion, he purchased a vessel, loaded her with military stores, and accompanied by several of his friends, he sailed in her to America, where he presented her to Congress, together with his services. He was received with the respect due to his rank, and the acknowledgment that his offers merited. A command was conferred upon him, and he lost no opportunity of distinguishing himself. Others of the French noblesse and army followed his example.— Roche du Fermoy was in the army that acted against General Burgoyne : De Coudray, an officer of rank in the French army, was drowned in the Schuylkill, a few days after the battle of Brandywine, in his eagerness to cross it, in order to join General Washington's army, that was reported to be on the point of engaging. Baron St. Ovary was another volunteer in their service.

But it was not only France that supplied them with a number of brave officers and volunteers.— Others came from various parts of Europe ; Germany especially, a country, that from the perpetual quarrels among its own sovereigns, and the many wars of which it has of latter times been the unhappy scene, abounds in military men more than any other part of Europe.

Through the assistance of these many foreigners, the American armies were daily improving in discipline and military skill. Together with these, their spirits and hopes increased in the same proportion. The prosperity with which they closed the present campaign on the frontiers of Canada, filled them with no unreasonable expectation, that it would influence the remainder of the war essentially in their favour.

Nor did they consider their want of success in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia as any thing decisive,

They acknowledged the bravery and military exertions of the British General and his troops; but they viewed their exploits in no other light than as acquisitions of honour, and remained fully persuaded, that instead of permanent advantages, they would only be productive of additional difficulties. The nature of the country, they were confident, would fight against all the efforts of Great Britain. Had its armies been twice as numerous, their opinion was, they would only have covered twice the quantity of ground, and obliged the Colonists to double their pains and endeavours to resist them.

In this idea, they looked upon all the generalship and courage that had been, or might be employed against them, only as protracted of the war. Such a notion could not fail to endue them with the most obstinate perseverance, as it was in some measure well founded. It was strongly propagated by all those, who from the consideration they had acquired, and the eminence to which they had risen by means of the present troubles, found it their interest to inculcate such a belief. Hence it was, that in their utmost extremities, they never admitted a moment's despair; and that whatever defeats and disappointments they met with, instead of brooding over, and being depressed by them, they immediately set about the means of repairing them. Had the situation of the country been far less favourable to them, and their resources much weaker than they really were, such a disposition alone must have proved a great, and almost unconquerable support.

C H A P. XXIX.

Transactions in Great Britain relating to America.

1777.

THE consequences of the war with America were now beginning to be felt in a manner that occasioned much complaint among the mercantile classes. The depredations of the American privateers extended to every part of Europe, as well as the West Indies, and they met either with an open or a clandestine countenance, in all the ports where their prizes were carried.

They now infested the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland with an audaciousness that equally astonished and perplexed the whole nation. Their language, appearance and manners being the same, they could not be distinguished from the people of the British islands. Thus whenever it was requisite, they assumed the shape of British subjects, and were by such means enabled to perpetrate much mischief undiscovered. The trade between Great Britain and Ireland was interrupted by them to such a degree, that convoys became necessary in the narrow channel that separates them.

Another circumstance happened at the same time, which afforded great cause of indignation to those who felt for the naval honour and the commercial interest of the nation. Numbers of foreign vessels, some of which were even French, were freighted by British merchants, for the purpose of carrying on their own trade with security, and protecting it from the American cruisers.

America did not, however, escape the vengeance of Britain : its navy and privateers exerted themselves

selves with such activity, that the losses of the Colonies, though small at the commencement of hostilities by sea, became gradually much greater, and were more severely felt than those of Britain.— As they were unable to afford such powerful protection to their trade as the British had the advantage of receiving, from sailing under convoy, their hazards were much greater; and though the prizes taken from them were commonly of inconsiderable value singly, yet the vast numbers that were captured, many of which were valuable, more than sufficiently balanced the damage done by their privateers.

France, in the course of this year, began to act a less covert and circumspect part than she had done hitherto, and to manifest in a manner that left no room for doubt, what were ultimately her designs with respect to Great Britain. Her naval preparations, however, not being sufficiently matured, nor the situation of affairs in America brought to that point she had in view, it was thought wisest in those who guided her councils, to extend her dissimulation to a longer term, though indeed it was so visible, that it could hardly deserve the name.

The British ministry, justly irritated at this ignominious duplicity of conduct, acted upon a variety of occasions with such explicit firmness, as left the Court of France no option between an absolute rupture and the redress of the grievances complained of. When pressed in this close and peremptory manner, the French ministry gave way, and made satisfactory concessions in words. But they were not accompanied with any reality; the same inimical system of conduct continuing without any effectual variation.

In this manner France temporised, according to the long established practice of her government; lest by precipitating matters, Britain might be roused

reused sooner than was convenient for the schemes she had long been projecting, and had almost brought to the period intended for their disclosure.

Among other instances of this double-dealing, the following was peculiarly remarkable:—The commander of an American privateer, named Cunningham, a bold and adventurous man, took the English packet from Holland, and carried her into Dunkirk, from whence he dispatched the mail to the American agents at Paris. As the vessel he commanded had been fitted out at Dunkirk, on complaint being made by the British ministry of the infraction of the peace and amity subsisting between both countries, he was committed to prison, together with his ship's company: but this imprisonment lasted but a short time; and was excused to the Americans, as owing to the want of some formality in his commission, and to impropriety of conduct on his part; by which he had subjected himself to the animadversion of the law. But while this appearance of satisfaction was given to the British ministry, on the one hand, the fullest countenance was shewn to the American privateer on the other. He was not only soon set at liberty from this pretended imprisonment, but allowed to purchase and equip a much stouter vessel than the other, to the manifest intent of cruising against the English.

This breach of faith was still more glaring, as it proved of greater detriment to Britain, upon a more important occasion. Incensed at the encouragement given to the American privateers, the Court of Great Britain directed Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador at Paris, to demand an order from the French ministry, that all the American privateers should depart the kingdom, together with their prizes. The application was made when the French shipping, employed in the Newfoundland fishery, were all out upon that station. Had they refused

refused to comply with the request, they foresaw that an immediate rupture would have been probably the consequence, and that this whole fleet would, in all likelihood, have fallen into the hands of the English; by which they would have been deprived of an immense number of the best seamen in France. They acquiesced, therefore, in the request, until the arrival of this valuable fleet had quieted their apprehensions for its safety. After which they devised such a variety of pretexts to defer the execution of this order, that not a single American vessel was dismissed from any of their ports.

But so firmly were the French ministry determined to afford all possible encouragement to the Americans, that they publicly assured the whole body of merchants throughout the kingdom, that they might depend upon the most effectual protection of any trade they might carry on in their own bottoms with the produce of America. This happened in the month of July.

In the mean time the most vigorous and open preparations were making in all the dock-yards of France. Her intentions were so manifest, that all Europe was amazed at the passiveness with which Great Britain viewed and permitted them, and concluded that it must proceed from the conscientiousness of her internal weakness, and total inability to prevent them.

The general opinion of politicians was, that on taking the final determination to subdue her Colonies by force of arms, Great Britain should at the same time have come to an open rupture with France, which, it could not be doubted, would support the Americans in their present quarrel. There would have been no deficiency of reasons for such a measure: the conduct of the French in the West Indies, afforded ample cause for the justification of such a step. She would then have been taken unprepared;

pared : what force she had at sea was inconsiderable ; and she was not in a condition to equip any formidable armament, from the neglect of her marine, the disorder her finances were left in at the demise of the late king, and the unsettled state of her affairs in general since the accession of the present.

Such were the reasonings of all the judicious people on the continent, who wished well to this country. They clearly foresaw that France would not omit so inviting an opportunity of dismembering the British empire, and would use her utmost diligence to co-operate in so desirable a work. They were of course astonished that Britain could hesitate to attack an enemy, that was unquestionably meditating all the mischief in his power, before he was in readiness to execute it. No valid motives could be alledged for such a delay. There was no medium between a reconciliation with the Colonies, or proceeding directly to hostilities with France.

In the midst of these preparations on the side of France, and the alarm they begun at length to create in the minds of the British ministry, the hopes they had conceived of General Burgoyne's expedition, began gradually to abate. They received successively such accounts, as foreboded no favourable issue to his operations. The fatal catastrophe that befel him, was not, however, apprehended. Were he to fail in the main object in view, still it was hoped he would be able to accomplish it in part ; or if that could not be effected, no suspicion existed that he would not be able to make good his retreat. A total discomfiture of an army of European veterans, never entered into the conceptions even of those who thought most favourably of the Americans ; especially after hearing with what quickness and facility they had been overpowered in the beginning of the campaign, and with what little resistance they had suffered posts of the utmost importance

importance to be taken from them, at a time when they knew no efforts should have been wanting to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy.

While the minds of people were suspended between hope and apprehension, how the campaign would terminate in America, the session of Parliament was opened on the twentieth of November. The principal intent of the Royal speech, was to assure the Houses, that the powers entrusted to the Crown for the suppression of the troubles in America, had been faithfully exerted; but that the contingencies of war would render further exertions necessary.

The members who supported the ministry in the House of Commons, were very warm in urging the necessity of continuing the measures now employed in America for its reduction; they expressed the fullest confidence that the ability, prudence, and spirit of the commanders, with the valour and discipline of the British troops, would shortly triumph over all resistance: they asserted, that no man born in this country, and bred in a due attachment to its excellent constitution, could be justified in standing up in that House to express a dissent from the line of action now adopted respecting the Colonies, and that factiousness alone could disapprove of them. An address was therefore moved, in approbation of the speech.

The members in the opposition, were no less strenuous in representing the ruinous effects of the unnatural war between Great Britain and her Colonies, and the fatal consequences which were on the point of following it. It was observed, that the strength of this country had been fully and vigorously, and yet ineffectually exerted, in order to obtain peace at the point of the sword. The merit of the British Generals and officers, and the bravery of their soldiers,

diers, were unquestionable ; but the nature of the war was such, as to defeat all their plans : the obstacles they met with, daily augmented : they were inherent to the country, and would in all likelihood prove insurmountable : it was time, therefore, to abandon the project of coercion, and try an opposite method. The grandeur, the interest, the preservation of what should be dearest to the people of Britain, depended upon a cessation of this unfortunate quarrel. After having fruitlessly employed the sword, it was now the duty of ministers "to have recourse to bonds of amity for the minds, instead of forging chains for the bodies of the Americans." Terms of amity and reciprocal benefit ought to be held out to them, while the fate of war was still undecided, and the honour of the nation yet unsullied by disgraces, that would render an accommodation no longer a matter of choice, but of humiliating necessity.

To this purpose an amendment to the address was moved ; the substance of which was, a request for the cessation of hostilities, and the adoption of necessary measures to terminate the differences with America.

In support of this amendment it was further alledged, that after carrying on an expensive war during the space of three years, notwithstanding a force of near sixty thousand men by land, and a fleet of a hundred ships of war, we were no further advanced, than when we begun. Our armies, with all the courage of the soldiers, and all the abilities of the commanders, had done nothing decisive. The army under Sir William Howe, was, indeed, master of the field ; but the latest news from that on the frontiers of New England, represented it in very precarious circumstances.

In the idea of obtaining a revenue from America, we had already expended much more than it could have

have amounted to in the course of many years, ~~on~~ a supposition that America would have assented to our utmost demands. Were a pacification to take place, it would be found, at the final conclusion of all that related to the war, that the charges attending it, or resulting from it, would produce an addition of more than thirty millions to the national debt.

The losses and distresses of the public were daily increasing; interest rose, and stocks fell in a very alarming proportion; the value of estates diminished: these were facts that could not be combated. The circumstances of the mercantile and trading classes had received no less a shock; failures and bankruptcies beyond all former precedents, shewed to what a degree the nation was injured by this unfortunate contest. The loss of our commerce with the continent of America, the damages sustained in the West India islands, the vast diminution of our fishery at Newfoundland, of our trade in the Levant, the Mediterranean, and on the coast of Africa, were necessary consequences of this fatal quarrel. All these were grievous considerations; but they would be followed with still greater causes of sorrow, unless the quarrel was terminated before the House of Bourbon entered into it. This, it were an insult to the commonest understanding, to make a doubt of at this juncture. If, therefore, this country found it so difficult to maintain the contest against the Colonies alone, how could it be expected that the powerful enemies that were preparing to assail us on every side, could possibly, in conjunction with them, be resisted?

The reply of ministry was, that peace, however desirable, was neither to be obtained nor wished for upon humiliating conditions. To propose it at any other season than that of victory, would be to prostitute the honour of the nation to no purpose. While
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the least shadow of success attended the resistance of America, it would never make any of those concessions, without which Great Britain could not consent to a pacification, without absolute disgrace.

A cessation of arms was condemned, as the worst of all policy. By temporizing, we gave the Americans further leisure to prepare for a continuation of their resistance; and if they were to be assisted from abroad in the manner prognosticated by opposition, such a measure would afford time to the enemy to come to their assistance.

There was strong reason to believe, that affairs would soon be settled to the satisfaction of this country. The expence of resisting the power of Britain was such, that Congress was now sinking under the burthen: the bounties given for the procurement of soldiers, were excessive, and alone would weigh them to the ground. This very excess was an incontrovertible proof, with what repugnance the people at large took up arms against this country, and how easy it would be, with judicious management, to prevail upon them to abandon that body of men, and return to their former allegiance to the parent state; especially when they came to reflect on their past happiness, and present misery.

In the course of this debate, the employing of the Indians was animadverted upon in the severest terms. They were represented as of no other use than to exercise the most inhuman barbarities upon the vanquished, without distinction of age or sex. It was infamous in a civilized people to admit of such merciless savages for allies. Nothing had given more provocation to the Americans. It shewed that we had lost all feeling for them; and that if we could not compel them to submit, we were determined to set no bounds to our vengeance, and to give up to murder and destruction all such as had the misfortune to fall into our hands. It had united them,

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them, from motives of the most urgent necessity, the defensee of all that is dearest to human nature, their wives, children, and families. We were hated before ; but we now were become objects of execration.

To this it was replied, that it was unjust to represent the employing of the Indians in so opprobrious a light. The emissaries of Congress had strongly urged them to take up arms for the Americans, before we had applied to them. If, therefore, any infamy could arise from such a measure, it fell equally on both parties.

Those who seemed on this day most displeased and disappointed, were those members of the House, known by the denomination of Country Gentlemen. Their votes and concurrence in ministerial measures had long been founded on the expectation of deriving a regular and considerable revenue from the Colonies. They now beheld an end of all their expectations, and found themselves involved in the support of a war, the principle of which some of them began to complain could hardly be defined. The emoluments derivable from it, would not certainly prove equivalent to the expences which it occasioned, especially as the duration of it did not promise to be short. From every concomitance that appeared, it threatened to be the most expensive, the most fruitless, and the most dangerous war that ever this country had undertaken to wage.

It was in reality a point of false honour for which the nation was now contending. Which ever of the two parties obtained the advantage in this dispute, nothing besides imaginary satisfaction would accrue from it : profit was entirely out of prospect. Blood would be shed, and money would be profused to no other end, than to leave both combatants in a state of debility, from which they would be many years in recovering. Should reconciliation ensue upon

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the terms insisted upon by Great Britain, should even this reconciliation, by the judicious management, and the moderation of the British ministry, be made satisfactory and acceptable to the Colonies, still the immense sums expended by this country to obtain this end, would render it far less desirable than a treaty of accommodation at the present period, upon almost any terms.

Such were the ideas of several of those who were esteemed the moderate part of the House: But the ministerial party continued still the strongest. The address was carried by a majority of two hundred and forty-three, to eighty-six.

In the House of Lords, the address which was moved in approbation of the speech, was opposed with great vehemence. Lord Chatham appeared again on this occasion; and, though worn down with infirmities, exerted himself in such a manner, as shewed that his great abilities had not forsaken him. He condemned the address upon the same principles the opposition in the House of Commons had done, and recommended an amendment of the same nature.

But his arguments and eloquence were lost: The pre-determination to reject all such proposals, was proof against all that could be urged in their favour; and he now experienced the truth of what he had long dreaded and foretold would come to pass,—that party attachments, uninfluenced by reasonings, would decide all parliamentary questions, and enslave the nation to undue influence.

Such was the complaint of that part of the public which adhered to his opinions. They expressed great indignation at the slight which was shewn to the judgment of such a man. It was hard, said they, that he to whom the British nation was so deeply indebted for the prosperity and grandeur to which it had attained, should be so soon after the

witness of its decline; but it was harder still, that he should live to see the day, when the great services he had rendered to his country should be undervalued, or forgotten; when his advice should be received with a neglect, bordering upon contempt, and his personal character treated with indifference, if not with disrespect.

The warmth they felt and expressed in the behalf of this illustrious nobleman, was the greater, as the discourse he made on this occasion, was, in their persuasion, equally judicious and animated; and founded upon truths, which none but the venal, the uninformed, or the weak-minded, would call in question. It was reprobated, said they, because it contained facts and allegations, the mention of which could not fail being hateful to those whom they covered with shame, and exposed to the ignominy they deserved.

Never indeed was Lord Chatham known to express himself with more freedom and fervour. Parliaments, he said, once knew their own dignity too well to suffer themselves to be led in the disgraceful manner to which they now submitted. They once thought themselves entitled to guide, instead of yielding implicitly to the direction of ministers. The House of Lords, in particular, ought to remember that it had been usual to ask their advice: they were the hereditary great council of the nation, and it ill became any individual to assume the province of dictating to them. But in lieu of this proper and constitutional method of proceeding, they were now informed of measures pre-concerted without their participation; and to which, nevertheless, their concurrence was requested. Ministry built upon events, the uncertainty of which was notorious, and called upon them to assist in the plans erected on that precarious ground, in a stile that was dictatorial, and precluded all deliberation. This was

Was not the language with which the ministers of this free country should presume to approach its guardians and representatives. Men must these be to endure such treatment, after having been so long and so invariably deceived, and led into such a complication of difficulties, through the repeated errors and incurable presumption of these ministers. Disappointments and misfortunes of every kind had constantly attended all their measures, and yet they had the confidence to rely upon the support of a public which they had so grievously offended, and of which they had sacrificed the evident interest to a system which reason and argument had fully demonstrated, knowledge and sagacity clearly had foreseen, and now fatal experience had completely proved to be pregnant with certain ruin to this country.

The noble empire of Britain was now doomed to ruin by the unskilfulness and incapacity of those who were unhappily entrusted with the management of its concerns, and the pride and haughtiness of the councils by which they were influenced. After advancing step by step in a track which they were continually admonished, not merely by their opponents in this country, but by the united voice of all the politicians in Europe, would infallibly conduct them to perdition, they still persisted in it; even in spite of the severe chastisement they had met with in those calamities they had brought upon their country. If such men could be supposed capable of listening to advice after having so long despised it, they ought now to be told, that unless they immediately receded from the measures they were pursuing, they would next have to account for the entire downfall of this kingdom. It was absolutely inevitable in the natural course of causes and effects. Did ministers flatter themselves that the united strength of the House of Bourbon, added to that of America, and of such powers as

would abet them, and take this occasion of quarrelling with us, would not outweigh that of Britain, forsaken as she appeared manifestly to be, and left alone to face such numerous and potent enemies?

An opening however still remained for accommodation. France and Spain, though sufficiently inimical to Britain, had not gone those lengths in their assistance which had been required by the Americans. The dissatisfaction they felt was an opportunity not to be neglected. Now, therefore, was the season to wean them from the connection they had formed with those two courts, by making such overtures, as from their reasonableness would not be rejected. This ought to be done without delay; those powers knew their interest too well to refuse any request on the part of America, were the refusal to endanger their schemes against Britain: but their compliance would probably be accompanied with such terms, as would then render an accommodation with America impracticable upon the conditions that might yet be obtained.

Lord Chatham was ably seconded by the Lords in opposition. Their arguments were chiefly grounded on the danger to which the nation would infallibly be exposed, in encountering such a multitude of enemies as threatened to arise from all parts, in case of a further prosecution of the war. The intentions of the House of Bourbon were so plain, that it would be an affront to the common sense of the public, to affect security from that quarter. However fair the language of those courts might continue to be, their deeds bespoke nothing but the most hostile designs; and their enmity was of so radical and hereditary a nature, that it was not to be expected they would refrain from indulging it on the most tempting occasion that ever had been, or could be offered, of humbling that enemy who had so often, and so lately humbled them.

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An appeal was made by the Lords in opposition to the bench of Bishops. They were conjured, as men whose profession enjoined them particularly an abhorrence of blood, to interest themselves in a manner becoming their function and character, in the cause of peace, and by no means to abet the sanguinary proceedings that had taken place in America.

The employing of the Indians was adverted to with peculiar acrimony. The same arguments were adduced against this measure as had been used in the House of Commons, and were enforced by Lord Chatham in the conclusion of his speech, with great warmth, and energy of thought and language.

To the various allegations urged against ministry, replies were made much in the same strain as those employed in their favour in the Lower House. It was particularly noticed, that the alliance formed with the Indians was the result of necessity : they were the original natives and possessors of the country ; connections had subsisted between them and the English and French successively ; they had, as neighbouring nations, been applied to for assistance by each, in the many wars between both. True it was, they were a blood-thirsty and merciless people ; but the knowledge of this was an additional motive to those who were conscious of it, not to expose themselves to the consequences of their barbarous disposition, and to avoid them by a due and timely submission.

Among other remarks on this subject, it was observed, that ministry could in no wise be blamed for endeavouring to strengthen the hands of their adherents in the Colonies, and of those who were fighting the battles of the nation there, by every method that policy suggested ; and therefore were justly entitled to employ, for the obtaining of this end, those means which God and nature had put in their power.

This latter expression was vehemently reprehended by the opposition. It was taken up with peculiar severity by Lord Chatham, and represented in the most criminal and atrocious light. He lamented the times, that had made such an alteration in the maxims and feelings of humanity which had hitherto distinguished the people of this country in so honourable a manner from all others. It was with equal shame and grief he saw the character of his countrymen tainted with so much baseness and barbarity. Those who avowed such principles in the House of Peers, ought to recollect that what fell from their lips did not fall to the ground; it was circulated throughout the nation, and left an indelible impression on the memory of those who heard it, whenever the excellence, the singularity, or the scandalous and evil tendency of what was spoken, made it any ways remarkable. He would venture to say, that what he had heard upon this occasion would equally astonish and offend every humane and liberal mind, and bring disgrace upon every individual, however exalted, that would dare to give it countenance.

After a most violent and acrimonious debates, the motion in favour of the address was carried, by a majority of ninety-seven votes, to no more than twenty-eight.

It had been asserted in the preceding debates, that the navy was in a strong and flourishing condition, fully adequate to the resistance of any naval force which the enemies of this country might possess, and amply sufficient to quiet the apprehensions of those who suspected inimical designs from the ancient and natural enemies of this country.

This representation was made in answer to those who insisted on the necessity of terminating the hostilities in America, from the obviousness of the danger to which the realm was exposed, from the undoubted

undoubted intentions of France to assist the Americans.

But this representation did not silence those who were of a disposition to require proofs of so flattering an assertion. They demanded an inquiry, and insisted upon such an exposition of facts as might remove all suspicion of matters being otherwise than they had been so confidently stated.

The reason they assigned for this demand was, that such an elucidation would revive the spirit of the nation, and depress that of its enemies in the most effectual manner. It would restore that confidence to ministry, which the suspicious universally prevalent of the neglected condition of the navy had so greatly diminished; and it would have a still more important effect, by deterring our enemies from the pursuit of the designs they were forming against us, when they perceived our ability to frustrate them.

They who opposed the demand, contended that a particular specification of the circumstances of the British navy, would be an act of the highest imprudence: it would be pointing out to the enemy where its deficiencies lay. No department, however carefully managed and well conditioned, was without its flaws. The strength and power of states consisted, in a great measure, in the secrecy and closeness with which its affairs were conducted.— They were shallow politicians who imagined that a manifestation of the exact state of our navy could answer any other purpose than to instruct our enemies in what manner to do it most detriment, and lay us open at the same time to the blame of all the judicious part of the world, for our weakness and want of discretion.

The ministry was however so closely pressed upon this matter, that a statement of the present condition of the navy was consented to. But when the

business came into discussion, the assertions on each side were so contradictory, that no insight into the affairs of that department was obtained that could with safety be depended on.

A motion being made in the Committee of Supply, ‘that sixty thousand seamen should be voted for the ensuing year,’ it occasioned loud complaints that a prolongation of the American war was plainly intended by the making of such a requisition. It showed, too, said they, how much the ministry had deceived the nation, or had been deceived themselves, by asserting, session after session, that nothing was to be apprehended from abroad, and that we might prosecute what measures we thought proper respecting America, without any fear of interruption or molestation upon that account.

Such, however, was the consciousness of the imminent danger to which the kingdom was exposed, that the motion was agreed to without a division.

As the bill passed during the last session for suspending, in some cases, the Habeas Corpus Act, was now expiring, the continuation of it was moved, for the same reasons alledged on its first passing.

This motion excited anew the discontent of those who had opposed it when first proposed. They alledged that its operations ought to be made known before an acquiescence could reasonably be expected to the present motion. In order, therefore, to remove any doubt of its propriety, and to clear it from any suspicion of harshness and oppression, it was moved by opposition on the other side, that a return should be made of the prisoners, and an account given of the prisons in which they were confined, whether in Great Britain or America, with copies of their commitments, specifying the bail offered for their enlargement, and the proceedings of the Privy Council pursuant to the powers vested

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in them. This return included all persons committed for high treason since the affair at Lexington.

This motion was assented to by ministry, the friends of which observed, that an inquiry of this kind would fully evince how little administration was inclined to treat any individuals with unnecessary severity, and how ready to give all reasonable satisfaction to such as required proofs of the propriety of their conduct, and the uprightness of their intentions.

The reasons alledged by opposition for a discontinuance of the bill, were, that no sort of necessity appeared for the precautions it alluded to. No effect had been produced by it, as none of those evils had happened which it was intended to remedy.— It was therefore useless; and being otherwise of a dangerous tendency to public freedom, ought not to be allowed of, but in cases of the extremest necessity.

It was argued, on the side of ministry, that the very motive mentioned by opposition for discontinuing the bill, was a proof of its expediency. It had prevented those evils which would otherwise have happened, and must have been severely punished. Its continuance was therefore highly expedient, as it contributed so effectually to domestic tranquility.

After a variety of arguments, much to the same effect, a continuance of the bill was voted by a majority of one hundred and sixteen, to sixty.

The next subject wherein America became again an object of discussion, was the land-tax. Here the disputants on either side renewed that immense variety of argumentation which had for years been repeated to so little purpose. The inutility of warring in America for the purposes of taxation, was enforced from the impracticability of raising a revenue out of a country that had no money, and which ought

ought to be considered as in a state of absolute desolation. It was now so much impoverished, as not to offer the least rational hope of being able to contribute in the least to the public exigencies of the empire. Its own were so pressing, that were Britain to obtain the point it proposed, and reduce the Colonies to submission, the wounds they had received in this contest must first be healed, ere we could carry our revenue schemes into execution.

It was further observed on this occasion, that matters were now come to that woeful extremity, that were a peace to take place that instant, and America consent to the most implicit subjection to this country, it would require a length of years for a re-settlement of affairs upon their former footing. The only benefit that could result from a pacification at the present moment, would be a cessation from blood and carnage. Those who expected more, had not attended to the mischiefs which the violence of the times had perpetrated on both sides. They were great in America, but they were greater still in Britain. Here, indeed, the lands had not been laid waste, nor the towns and cities reduced to ashes, but immense funds of future prosperity had been lavished for the purposes of destruction, and were now lost for ever. It had been calculated that larger sums had been expended in consequence of this unhappy altercation, than would have sufficed to purchase, and bring to the completest improvement, all the uncultivated lands in the kingdom.

After a variety of observations of this nature, it was concluded, that in order to arrive at a precise and well-founded knowledge of the question so often agitated,—the propriety of continuing the American war, an examination of the means by which it was to be supported, seemed indispensably necessary. It was a direct and obvious method; it led

led straight to the point, and would at once enable men to come to a clear decision.

But an examination of this kind including a close inspection into numerous particulars, and an accurate view of all transactions relating to this important object, nothing less than a careful inquiry into the present state and circumstances of the nation, could answer the purpose proposed,

Such were the sentiments delivered on this occasion by Mr. Fox, whose extraordinary abilities had already been oftentimes exercised in the many debates concerning American affairs.

He moved for a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the state of the nation.—The objects he principally recommended to their attention, were the expences incurred by the war, and the resources remaining to raise the supplies for its continuance, the losses it had occasioned, the commercial situation of this country in consequence of it, the present aspect of the war, what hopes of success it afforded, the conduct of ministry relating to it, the means of re-establishing tranquility, the situation of Britain respecting foreign powers, and the progress made in America towards a reconciliation by the Commissioners appointed for that purpose.

These were the outlines of the inquiry. Other particulars of less importance were also mentioned, as deserving of investigation. That sufficient time might be afforded to procure the various papers and documents requisite for such an inquiry, he proposed that the committee should be fixed for the second of February, two months from the present day.

The motion for an inquiry into the state of the nation being complied with, Mr. Fox followed it with another to request that the papers relating to the transactions of the Commissioners in America, should be laid before the House. But this was refused by ministry, The ground for this refusal was, that

that it would be disclosing matters of which the knowledge would prove highly prejudicial to many individuals. As much should be made known as was consistent with their safety, and with the general rules of discretion in affairs that required secrecy ; but an entire and unreserved disclosure of transactions wherein so much ought to remain concealed, would obviously be productive of detriment to the business in agitation,

On the following day, which was the third of December, the disaster of the army under General Burgoyne, was notified to the House. Great was the grief and concern which it excited ; but the reproaches which it drew on the ministry, were not less. Their imprudence, their obstinacy, their presumption, were the source of this, and of all the calamities that had befallen, and were still awaiting this country. A fatality attended all their proceedings. At home they had incurred the odium, and the contempt of all the judicious part of the community ; abroad they had involved the affairs of the nation in utter confusion. It was engaged in a sanguinary quarrel with the inhabitants of a considerable part of the empire, and was exposed to the insults and ill treatment of all its neighbours.

With expressions and complaints of this nature, was that fatal intelligence received by the members of the opposition. The favourers of ministry were, upon this occasion, struck with silence and dejection. The fact was, indeed, of so melancholy a nature, that both parties were equally affected. It was a national calamity, and as such, could not fail being deeply felt by an assembly of men, who, however they might differ in opinion concerning public measures, must naturally be supposed to have sincerely at heart the welfare of their country.

There were some, however, who did not join in this general despondency. They seemed, on the contrary,

contrary, to feel a stronger determination to pursue vigorous measures, and to act, if possible, with more resolution than before. They reprobated, with great energy of language, that readiness to despair of the commonwealth, to which some were inclined from the weakness and timidity of their disposition, and which others affected from motives of party. It was not, said they, with such feeble sentiments, that a people with whom the British nation delights to compare itself, was used to meet adversity. When fifty thousand Romans had been cut to pieces at Cannæ, not above two or three days journey from Rome, the senate did not express more alarm than was now felt or pretended, at the capture of no more than five thousand men, at the distance of three thousand miles, on the other side of the ocean.

Certain it is, that the news of the misfortune that had befallen General Burgoyne, was received with much more concern, and occasioned much greater affliction, than became the character of the British nation. It was undoubtedly a severe disappointment; but the discouragement resulting from it, was much greater than the real detriment which the public sustained by that unfortunate event.

On the fourth of December, the Committee of Supply reported, that the sum of six hundred and eighty-three thousand pounds would be wanted for the expences of the office of Ordnance, in the ensuing year. The immensity of the demand roused all the fire of opposition. It was asked, whether ministry did seriously believe that the resources of this country were adequate to the charges of a war, of which only one single department called for such a consumption of money? The sum demanded, exceeded by one hundred and forty thousand pounds, that which was expended in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine; the most active, important, and successful year of the late glorious war.

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We then maintained near three hundred thousand fighting men, and our operations were extended to every quarter of the globe. It was incomprehensible, therefore, how so vast a sum as that which was at present required, could be wanted, when the number of men employed amounted to no more than eighty thousand, and our Colonies were the only theatre of hostility.

Mr. Burke, in particular, was very pressing on this subject, and displayed much knowledge, as well as eloquence, in the manner in which he treated it. Receiving no answer to the several interrogations he had made relating to the business in debate, and the Speaker preparing to put the question, he declared with great firmness and resolution, that the question should not be put, till ministry had given some satisfactory explanation on so weighty a subject. The expence and the service for which it was intended, bore no manner of proportion, and could not be reconciled.

In answer to these questions, which were reiterated with great vigour, it was replied on the side of ministry, that the extraordinary expence of this department, was owing to the extremely hostile disposition of the country where the war was waging. No supplies of any kind could be purchased there, and every article requisite for this branch of the service must be transported thither from home. This necessarily created a prodigious expence, unprecedented in any former wars.

It was also observed, that in the last war the foreign troops in the pay of Great Britain, provided their own ammunition. This made a part of the contracts formed with them, and did not enter into the accounts of the Board of Ordnance, which of consequence fell incomparably short of what they must have done had so vast an expenditure been included. True it was, that Great Britain maintained near

near three hundred thousand men in arms during the period that had been mentioned ; but the number of British forces at the time, constituted but a part of the whole strength we then employed ; and it was only to them the estimates of the Board of Ordnance related.

Such an explanation, it was replied by opposition, shewed at once what was to be expected from the continuance of a war, the very nature of which was so much more destructive than any that had ever preceded. Every branch of expence arising from it, was carried to the veriest extremity of excess. Stipulations with foreigners, or contracts with our own people, were equally onerous. They alike took advantage of the many real, and many pretended difficulties they found in complying with the terms of their respective agreements, to burden us with the most enormous expences.

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